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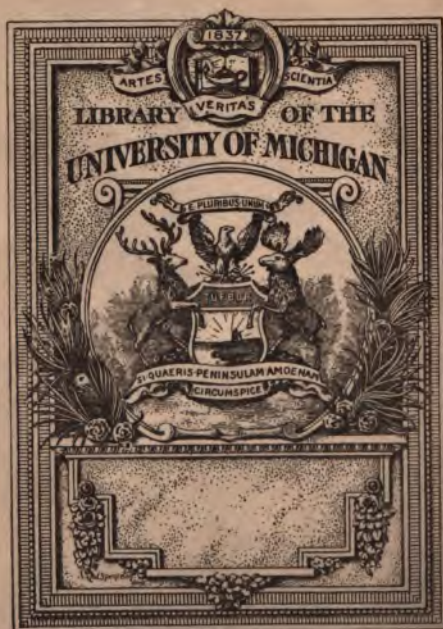
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ALL THE CHILDREN  
OF ALL THE PEOPLE  

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WILLIAM HAWLEY SMITH









**ALL THE CHILDREN  
OF  
ALL THE PEOPLE**



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**TORONTO**

ALL THE CHILDREN  
OF  
ALL THE PEOPLE

*A STUDY OF THE ATTEMPT TO EDUCATE  
EVERYBODY*

BY  
WILLIAM HAWLEY SMITH  
AUTHOR OF "THE EVOLUTION OF DODD"

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1912

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## TO THE READER

HOWEVER reluctant one may be to acknowledge the fact, it is none the less certain that the task of trying to educate everybody, which our public schools are engaged in, has proved to be far more difficult than the originators of the idea of such a possibility thought it would be when they set out upon the undertaking.

This is a mild way of stating a most important truth.

Moreover, this truth is steadily forcing its way into general recognition among all classes and conditions of modern society.

All people who are interested in educational affairs are thinking about the situation, and are talking about it constantly, both in private and in public.

Every educational meeting, from a local Teachers' Institute to the annual gathering of the National Educational Association, now makes this condition of affairs the chief subject of its attention, its addresses and discussions.

These facts all prove that the issue of attempting to universalize education is just now one of most intense interest and importance. It follows that, since the whole subject is yet in an unsettled, not to say fermenting, condition, it is open and ready for the most careful study and consideration.

It is because all these things are so that I have written this book, which I hope may help at least a little toward the successful solution of the most momentous problem of the age.

WILLIAM HAWLEY SMITH.





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"THE GREAT PROBLEM OF THE PRESENT DAY IS TO RECONCILE THE TRADITIONS OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE CULT OF THE HUMANITIES WITH THE GROWTH OF THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT." — *M. Maurice Steeg.*

"EDUCATION IS GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT; IT IS NOT CREATION." — *From Wise Sayings.*

"I NEVER SAW A HEN YET COULD HATCH OUT OF AN EGG ANYTHING DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WAS IN IT WHEN IT WAS LAID." — *Old Irish Woman.*

"NO MAN IS REALLY WELL EDUCATED WHO IS NOT 'ONTO HIS JOB.'" — *From Sayings of an Engineer.*

"ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT ANY INDIVIDUAL CHILD NATURALLY 'HUMS TO' IS EDUCATIVE FOR THAT CHILD." — *From Sympathetic Vibration.*



# ALL THE CHILDREN OF ALL THE PEOPLE

## CHAPTER I

### "BORN SHORT"

Prefatory Remark — Babies not "all alike" — The Myth of the "Wholly Normal" and the "Perfectly Rounded" Child or Adult — Our Own Instinctive Feeling *vs.* the Popular Notion in the Premises — Everybody "Born Short" somewhere — Range of the Condition — Brief List of Cases in Point — Color-Blind and Tone-Deaf People — The Phenomena of "Shortage" in Lower Grade Pupils in the Public Schools — Pupil who could read to himself, but not aloud — Pupil who could not learn Multiplication Tables — Author's Experience regarding Inability to memorize Dates or master Classical Languages — Teacher and Judge who could not "tell Time" — People who cannot tell Right Hand from Left — Eminent Men who cannot spell — Julia Ward Howe on Charles Sumner — Shaler on Agassiz — General Grant — The Meaning of these Data.

In considering the practicability of the attempt to educate all the children of all the people, the whole issue turns on the natures of the children themselves, their inherent powers and capabilities, individually and *de novo*.

These elemental factors in the make-up of all children I have carefully investigated for many years, and it is specifically on the strength of the data thus collected that I begin these studies of the subject of popular education.

There is a certain type of man who is wont to remark, on occasion: "All babies look alike to me." Yet the first mother he meets will tell him, that what he says is based on the most superficial observation, and that he "doesn't know what he is talking about."

All my own observations have forced me to acknowledge the fact that there is a marked difference in children, even at the time of their birth, a difference so pronounced that it is perfectly safe to say that no two of them are exactly alike. And just as soon as these bits of infantile humanity begin to show their mental efficiencies or inefficiencies, these differences become more and more manifest. As infancy advances into childhood, childhood into youth, and youth into maturity, these primal qualities intensify their distinguishing marks upon each soul, and brand it as itself and not any other in all the world. This is the core of all individuality. That is, it is not uniformity, but diversity, that constitutes the fundamental element which makes a human being what he is.

A moment's thought upon this proposition will result in the conclusion that the "wholly normal" individual, one who tallies exactly and at all points to uniform specifications made and provided, does not exist, and that the "perfectly rounded" child or adult is a myth, and so cannot be figured with definitely.

So far as we are ourselves concerned, we each one instinctively feel and positively know that these things are as I have stated them; but the popular theory regarding them is quite the reverse of the way I have put them, so much so as to obscure, almost entirely, the facts in the case. At least this is true, that their significance, as they stand related to individual possibilities



in the affairs of life, is not recognized as it should be in the theories and practices for human development that prevail to-day.

Stated in another way, — for I wish to emphasize this point from the beginning, — we are all aware, in our inmost hearts, that we are not equally strong in every part of our make-up, and that we were *born that way*. That is, as I have phrased it at the heading of this chapter, we all know that we are "born short" somewhere; that in some spheres in the mental plane we do not function as readily as we do in some others. We all know this.

And because we all know this — because I know it, and everybody I have ever known or known about or have heard of knows it — I feel fully warranted in making the inductive conclusion that everybody in all the world is "born short" somewhere. Such shortage may be so slight in some individuals as to escape the notice of all but the expert, or it may be so much in evidence in other cases as to be noticed by everybody at a glance. It may vary all the way from a minor idiosyncrasy to blank idiocy. But in its manifestations in these two extremes, and all the way between them, the phenomena belong in the same category; they are but quantitative exploitations of one and the same psychological condition.

These facts, and their complements, which will be considered later, form the very "central heart" of the possibility of educating everybody.

To analyze and make a list of such shortages, as they appear in all the varieties of humanity that the world holds, would be an endless task, and volumes could not contain the record, though it would all be germane to



the issue I am considering. All I care to do here, however, is to note enough of the phenomena to form a base for the educational theory I have in mind to stand upon.

Cases in point are as thick as blackberries, whichever way one looks, if only he has eyes to see; and one such list, which any one might make, would be as good as another for all practical purposes. I claim no special merit for the list I am about to give. But since I must have such data to start with, I submit what follows. Most of the cases cited have come under my own personal observation, and all the others are vouched for by the most reliable witnesses.

Here then is my list—the data on which the first part of my argument is based:—

My attention was first called to the fact that there is such a condition as lack of ability to function in some mental plane—that all human beings are not alike in what they can do with their minds—when I was little more than a child, through my association with two of my youthful mates, one of whom was color-blind and the other tone-deaf. The first was a neighbor boy who could not distinguish red from green. He could perceive no difference between the color of a red rose and the green foliage of the bush on which it grew. The second was a little girl who could not “rise and fall her eight notes” at singing school. She sat near me in the class, and I suffered the tortures of the lost (for I have a very keen musical ear) from being compelled to hear her monotone droning through the songs the rest of us could sing as they were written. These two cases made a great impression upon me, and I have never forgotten them.

Later in life, as a teacher in the public schools, I found "shortages" or "lacks" cropping out, to a greater or less degree, in all the pupils who came under my tuition. The phenomena began to show in the first year's work, and there were signs of the same qualities, more or less pronounced, in each several pupil, till he or she dropped out of school or graduated.

Thus, I found pupils who required several terms to learn to read the simplest lessons. These children were not idiots, in the ordinary use of that word, though it would not be at variance with what I consider to be the truth to say that they were idiotic in spots — on the reading spot, as it were. I have known of pupils who never could learn to read, though they were normally able on some other lines. The late Supt. E. A. Gastman, of Decatur, Ill., once reported to me the case of a boy of twelve in one of his ward schools, who, though he was neither deaf nor dumb, yet never could learn to read aloud; though his teacher discovered one day, much to her surprise, that the lad could read quite well to himself, and that he was specially fond of reading history, in which he was much more than usually proficient for one of his years. As this boy appeared among his mates, there was nothing in looks or actions to indicate this particular shortage; that is, he could talk well enough, and would pass for what is called a normal child to the casual observer. And yet this is his record.

Granted that this case is exceptional. Indeed it is one of the most peculiar I have ever had knowledge of. But that does not remove it from a legitimate place in the list I am making up. Nor do I think that this case is really as remarkable as it at first seemed to me, and



may seem to the reader to be. Doubtless there are a great many primary teachers in this country who could cite cases from their own experiences with pupils under their care that would equal or surpass this one in strangeness.

I once had a pupil who could not learn the multiplication tables, though he was remarkably able in some other studies. When he grew to manhood he became an inventor and business promoter, in which capacity he amassed a fortune. But he never learned the multiplication tables. I met him when he was a man of wealth, at the head of a large manufacturing establishment, and asked him if he had learned the multiplication tables yet, and he replied: "No! Why should I learn the multiplication tables? I can hire girls at six dollars a week who can do that work for me! Life is too short for me to waste it in trying to master what I have no head for!" His remark is worth serious consideration.

This case is also rare, but there are multitudes of teachers in the grades who could duplicate it out of their own record books. There is a story, which those who surely ought to know declare to be well founded, that no less a personage than Dean Stanley had this particular shortage, and that, in the prime of his life, he once said, in the presence of a gentleman with whom he was doing business: "seven times three are twenty-three," and that he knew no better till his friend corrected him!

But I must not continue the list in just this line. Time and space would fail me to tell of the pupils I have had who were "short" in spelling! (Please don't all exclaim at once!) In lack of ability to memorize dates I have had many cases. I myself could never learn

to draw a map, or anything else but my salary. And yet I strove hard, with all my might and main indeed, to do such work. I was equally a failure in my attempts to master Latin and Greek, though I virtually sweat blood in trying to obtain a knowledge of these languages. I used to sit up till late at night to dig out my translations, and was up and at work again in the very early morning. But it was a rare thing for me to make a recitation on which I could get a record of 7 on a scale of marking in which 10 meant correct. The men and women are yet living who could testify to the truth of these statements. I record them now at this time of my life, not with shame or any feeling of disgrace, though in school I was more than once put to a mental torture that was akin to crucifixion because of my "shortage" on these counts! And I think these terrible experiences of my schoolboy days are not nearly as exceptional among the pupils of to-day as they ought to be.

If the reader is a teacher, please pause and think a moment just here!

Any teacher of experience can extend this list of "short" pupils *ad infinitum*. I turn, then, from this part of the record of children to that of grown-ups.

Perhaps I ought to explain that these adult cases are given for the sake of showing the persistence of "born so" lacks or excesses. It is this fact that makes them germane to my chief contention, of vital interest in the issue in hand.

I once knew a school teacher, a good one, too, she was, who could not tell the time of day on a watch or clock. I mentioned this fact once, at a public educational meeting, and at its close a judge of the court in that district, who



happened to be present and so heard my remarks, came to me and said: "Mr. Smith, I did not suppose that any other human being in all this world ever was afflicted as I have always been. But the case of the teacher who could not tell time is exactly like my own. I have never been able to tell the time of day on a watch or clock. I carry a watch because that is counted the proper thing for a judge to do; but if I want to know, for certain, what time it is, I ask some one who knows!" I afterwards inquired of lawyers who practiced before this judge's court, and was told that he always asked some one what time it was before he adjourned court. They said he would squint at the clock, as if he could not see its face clearly, and would then inquire what time it was and wait till some one told him! None of the lawyers knew positively that the judge could not "tell time," he concealed his defect so cleverly, but one of them said to me: "It always seemed curious to us that he could see our faces, anyhow well enough to tell us apart, and could not see the face of the clock."

I know a primary teacher, of national reputation, who cannot tell her right hand from her left except by a special mental effort and the use of a particular method she has for determining which hand is which. I also know a leading college president, who is at the head of one of the best institutions of its class in this country, who is "short" in the same way.

I know a State Commissioner of Education, who is among the foremost of educational leaders in the United States, who never writes a letter with his own hand. He cannot spell — has never been able to learn to do so.

A leading bishop of one of the strongest denominations in this country once said to me: "It would be a

notable day when I would not spell *which* in at least three different ways in writing a single page."

In her autobiography Julia Ward Howe states that Charles Sumner had so little mathematical ability that Professor Pierce, of Harvard College, once said to him: "Charles, I never expect to get the simplest mathematical proposition whittled down to so fine a point that even the tip of it could enter your mind."

The late N. S. Shaler, in his autobiography, said, in speaking of the examination that Professor Agassiz gave him, when he became the pupil of that noted scientist: "He did not probe me in my weakest place, mathematics, for the good reason that, badly off as I was on that subject, he was in a worse plight."

I know an actress of such wonderful tragic ability that she can thrill an audience to the point of frenzy (the real thing), and yet she could not "make change for a dollar" to save her life.

Every reader of General Grant's *Memoirs* will recall the story he tells of his financial "shortage" as shown in buying a colt when he was a boy; and the story of the Grant-Ward failure shows how his youthful trait remained with him to the close of his life.

Similar cases, showing the general distribution of "shortage" among men and women whose names are honored throughout the world could easily be given, but these are enough to establish all I am contending for here. All these and multitudes besides have demonstrated that they had a lack of ability to function in certain spheres of the mental plane—that they were "short" on some counts. It is equally true that these "shortages" manifested themselves in the early life of the individuals concerned, that they were "born short"

in each and every case, and that such "shortage" cut a considerable figure in their lives and acts, both in their youth and in their adult life. This point is so clear that I can rest the further presentation of the testimony that upholds it right here. The facts I have stated are undeniable, and they all mean something. I shall refer to them again and again when I come to argue the case in full.



## CHAPTER II

### "BORN LONG"

Partial List of "Longs"—Mathematical Boy of Six—Primary Pupils who could "always" read or draw—Case of Robert Gardenhire—"Absolute Pitch" possessed by Boy of Ten—Idiot Girl a Crochet Genius—Juvenile Prodigies—The "Pronounced" *vs.* the "Exceptional"—General Distribution of the Phenomena of "Longage" in Some Form—Found among All Classes of People—Author's Ability to memorize Prose and Poetry—Similar Cases noted—Examples from Other Walks of Life—The Little Engine—The Gardener—The Cook—The Significance of these Facts.

TURNING now to the other side of the shield, I give herewith a limited list of people I have known who were "long," or here or there, who had an excess of ability to function in certain spheres of the mental plane. Here, also, my observations began when I was quite young; and while I did not philosophize upon the data at that time of my life, yet they made a marked impression upon me as peculiar mental phenomena, which has continued even to this day.

I remember a boy of six who was always "making up problems" which he delighted to spring upon his elders. One, I remember, was as follows: If a quarter of a dollar is fifteen sixteenths of an inch in diameter, and it is 25,000 miles around the earth, how many quarters laid side by side would it take to reach around the world? He would make up and solve "mentally" the most intricate problems in interest, and when asked how he got the results, he would reply, "At first I

thought it was so much ; but when I thought about it I knew it was so much." This was all he could tell of how he obtained his results, which were always correct.

Surely a six-year-old boy who could make up and mentally solve problems like this might be counted as having an excess of ability to function in the mathematical plane. He had never been to school when he did this work, and had had no instruction in arithmetic to amount to anything.

As a teacher, I had pupils who could not remember when they learned to read, they acquired the art so early in life. All primary teachers are familiar with similar cases. I have had pupils in the lower grades who, unaided, could draw pictures in correct perspective, and who "had always done so." I have also known grade pupils who were walking cyclopedias of dates and events, but who did not have to make any special effort to acquire such proficiency.

But I need not multiply instances of this sort in these strata of human life. All teachers of experience are familiar with them, and most parents know something of them. So, leaving these, I turn to similar phenomena in older people.

One of the most remarkable cases of this sort that I have ever had personal knowledge of is that of Robert Gardenhire, a full-blooded negro, of Augusta, Ga. I became acquainted with this case through a classmate of mine, a former teacher, and so one well able to judge in the premises, and with his assistance I was enabled to make a thorough examination of the young man and to verify the remarkable phenomena his mental functioning exhibited.

At the time of our examination, this man was about twenty years old. He had been to school less than a year, all told. He could read and write a little, but was "wholly uneducated," in the ordinary meaning of those words. He was working in an oil mill, shoveling cotton seed at seventy-five cents a day, and that appeared to be as much as he could earn at such work—seemed about his limit of value in that direction. In a word, he was a very ordinary negro, so far as his general ability was concerned.

When he was about seventeen years old people discovered that he was "bright in figures," and began to ask him questions. The result was that he soon acquired local fame, and almost every one he met would test his ability, till in a short time he became wonderfully expert in solving certain kinds of mathematical problems. He was especially strong in multiplication. Give him two factors to be taken together, and he would promptly give you the correct result. If the factors were only "two-placed" numbers, each, he would announce the product instantly. If they were "three-placed" numbers, he would hesitate just a little before replying. The work was all done "mentally," that is, he never wrote the figures down. He could work a little with written numbers, but in such work he was very slow. This way of working was very distasteful to him. He hated it.

To this unlettered negro my friend dictated thirty-three problems in multiplication. The gentleman himself wrote the factors upon a sheet of paper, as he announced them, and then immediately set down, after each set, *seriatim*, the answers, as the young man gave them to him. In no case was there a delay of more



than a second or two in giving these answers. The list of problems thus given and solved is as follows : —

|                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| $27 \times 35 = 945$    | $49 \times 349 = 17101$    |
| $91 \times 86 = 7826$   | $169 \times 337 = 38553^+$ |
| $57 \times 81 = 4617$   | $17 \times 15 = 255$       |
| $97 \times 197 = 19109$ | $19 \times 19 = 361$       |
| $76 \times 751 = 57076$ | $96 \times 78 = 7488$      |
| $71 \times 91 = 6461$   | $42 \times 37 = 1554$      |
| $71 \times 87 = 6177$   | $37 \times 91 = 3367$      |
| $67 \times 88 = 5896$   | $67 \times 77 = 5159$      |
| $76 \times 78 = 5928$   | $57 \times 791 = 45087$    |
| $96 \times 17 = 1632$   | $71 \times 851 = 60421$    |
| $27 \times 187 = 5049$  | $69 \times 546 = 37674$    |
| $97 \times 998 = 96806$ | $99 \times 999 = 97801^+$  |
| $78 \times 87 = 7836^+$ | $4 \times 1870 = 7480$     |
| $87 \times 97 = 8439$   | $17 \times 110 = 1870$     |
| $72 \times 101 = 7272$  | $15 \times 12 = 180$       |
| $32 \times 13 = 416$    | $72 \times 110 = 7920$     |
| $24 \times 72 = 1728$   |                            |

I have verified these problems, and find there are three mistakes in the answers. (You would smile should I tell how many mistakes I made in my calculations, in doing this proof work! Suppose you try it yourself, and see how you come out!)

And this case, wonderful as it is, is only one of many. The similar case of Zerah Colburn has been well known to psychologists and professors of pedagogy for many years, and "lightning calculators" are as thick as side shows, the country over.

Nor are such cases confined to mathematics alone. They crop out in nearly every other line of life that is known to humanity.

Again, I know a blind boy who has the gift of "absolute pitch" in music. Strike any key on the piano and he will name the tone produced. Strike as many as you

will, even if that means every key on the board, and all at once, and he will name for you every key you have hit. Professor Frank Hall, of Aurora, Ill., brought this case to my notice.

I once met a girl of twelve who had such a poor sense of number that she could not count at all, and yet she was so skillful with a crochet hook that she could duplicate any pattern of crochet work that might be given her. She would even take a printed pattern of a piece of lace, as it appears in a needlework book or magazine, and produce the work perfectly with her hook and thread, though wholly unable to count a stitch, or to read a word of the printed directions. She also made original patterns which were of rare beauty.

I have a record of a boy who was ready to enter college at nine years of age. He read Latin well at five, and a little later mastered French and German. He took delight in differential calculus at eight, and was very fond of chemistry. The remarkable record made by William James Sidis is a similar case that all the world has recently been made familiar with.

I have a young lady friend who was born blind. When she was about three years old, a skillful doctor removed the cause of her blindness, and she could see. As soon as she could use her eyes she began to read. She never had to be taught how to read, but read almost everything fluently from the first. Before she was five, I put a copy of "Sartor Resartus" into her hands one evening, just to see what she could do, and she read page after page without a halt.

But I need not multiply cases of this class. Time and space would fail me to tell of Mozart, and Millais, and Blind Tom, and Lope de Vega, and Tasso, and

Webster, and hundreds of others, whose names and records are well known, and all of whom were notably "long" in some lines — were "born so," and were so as long as they lived.

All these people and their similars are "long" in their ability to function in certain spheres of the mental plane.

But, some one says, these cases are nearly all exceptional; they are taken from the unusual walks of life; and hence their experience and records are not a fair measure to use on the rank and file. To which I reply these cases are phenomenal rather than exceptional. And I am impressed with the fact that there is no need of making even such a concession. For, when I note my own ability to function on some mental planes, I find myself as pronounced and exceptional as the rest, and the same is doubtless true in your own case, whoever you are. And when I look about amongst my neighbors, right here at home, I find that every one of them, even the humblest, is about as pronounced and exceptional as you, or I, or any one.

Thus, not to draw aside the veil of my own personality too far, and surely not to boast, I have always been "long" in the matter of remembering certain pieces of literature so that I could quote them. This memorizing at pleasure has never cost me any effort, nor does it do so to this day, provided the selection takes my fancy — strikes me right. If it does that, I can master it without trying to do so at all. I can repeat, as I would my alphabet, the nursery rhymes learned in my infancy; and it is only a few days since I memorized a poem of sixty-four lines by hearing a public reader recite it a single time before an audience. Pieces memor-



ized in that way I retain well, without any particular effort. It all depends on "how they strike me." If they "hit me hard," they stay with me. More than twenty-five years ago I heard Henry Ward Beecher deliver a lecture that greatly pleased me, and I could write several columns of it to-day, though I have never tried to memorize a word of it. This is a power that I have always had, from my earliest recollection, this ability to memorize certain things without effort. I was "born so," and that is the way I am to this day.

And again some one says "exceptional."

Well, two doors south of where I am writing, I had, for years, a neighbor who could discount me in this sort of "exception." He is a dry goods merchant, and a successful one too. I remember his coming over to my study one evening and quoting the whole of the "New Locksley Hall," when that poem first came out, after a single reading, and I am sure he could quote it to-day, with equal ease and accuracy.

Two doors north of where I am writing lives a woman who can quote seven of Shakespeare's plays, *verbatim et literatim*, and she never spent an hour in *trying* to memorize them. She will also repeat Browning by the thousands of lines, and is equally able to recite Walt Whitman, page after page. She is the wife of a bookkeeper and was for years a commercial stenographer.

And again some one says "exceptional," and adds: "Take some instances from the commoner walks of life." Well, dry goods merchants and commercial stenographers are not regularly counted as among the intellectual "Four Hundred," but my experience is that this trait of excess of ability to function in some mental



plane extends through all the social strata and covers all sorts of mental ground. Thus, a street car conductor on the line that runs in front of my door has just completed a steam engine that is so small that it can be entirely covered with a lady's thimble. He has built it at odd times, and "just for fun." He is not a professional mechanic.

The man who takes care of my "home place" is of Irish extraction, born and reared on the "East Side" in New York City. Until he was sixteen, all the green and growing things he had ever seen or knew about were such as he saw in the City Hall Park. Yet I never met his equal as a gardener. He will coax the finest of vegetables, such as would baffle my very best efforts to produce, out of a soil and environment that I could get little or nothing out of. And yet I grew up on a farm, and was taught to do these things, while this man was reared on cobblestone pavements, in the region of Five Points. He and a weed cannot exist on the same acre, and he would sit up nights to nurse a drooping plant to vigor again. I would not, and the chances are that the plant would die if I did.

For years we had in our kitchen (I'm surely within the range of the common walks of life now) a woman who was "long" on cooking. She had had no particular training in the art, but she "loved to cook." This she could do to perfection, practically without any special effort or application, but because it was the joy of her life. She used to say it "just came natural" to her. I am sure it did.

But I need not make this list longer. The truth is, I have rarely met a man, woman, or child who was not "long" somewhere. And if you, dear reader, will look

**within and about yourself, you will find that your experience and mine are very much alike. The cases you have seen and know about are not identical with those I have noted, but they exhibit the same principle. And that is enough.**

## CHAPTER III

### SOME COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Common Opinions regarding "Shorts" and "Longs"—How "Shorts" regard "Longs" and "Longs" regard "Shorts"—Why both are wrong—Sumner and Gardenhire compared—Wendell Phillips on Sumner—Gardenhire and Heredity—Zerah Colburn—Blind Tom—Grant as Soldier, Statesman, and Financier—Similar Cases—The very "Long" apt to be very "Short" in some Places, and *vice versa*—Applications drawn from these Comparisons—"Shorts" not "Fools"—Why Names of People who are "Short" cannot be given—Wrong Opinions regarding "Longs"—Personal Applications of the Principle.

AND now, having given these lists of "shorts" and "longs," having shown that there are such phenomena as lack and excess of ability to function in certain spheres of the mental plane in human experience, I wish to make a few comparisons in the premises and to note some conclusions that are very apt to follow naturally, though I think wrongfully, in cases such as I have noted.

In the first place, I wish to emphasize the fact that it is a very common conclusion that, if any given person is pronouncedly "short" or "long" *in some particular line* of ability to function mentally, he or she is also equally short or long *in all other ways*. Such conclusions are especially prominent with all of us when we compare other people with ourselves.

If you, dear reader, are a good mathematician, if arithmetic was always the delight of your life, and

algebra likewise, and you learn, in some way, that a neighbor or an acquaintance of yours can hardly add a short column of figures correctly, the chances are many to one that your opinion of that neighbor or acquaintance will be lowered not a little by such discovery. Or, if you are a good speller, naturally so, and you get a letter from some correspondent in which there are misspelled words, the probabilities are that you will set the writer down as an "ignorant person," to say the least. But if you are "short" on mathematics and come across some one else who cannot add, you do not look down on such a one. You sympathize with him — you know just how it is yourself. The same is true if you are a poor speller. You are "drawn to" any one in like case.

Again, if you have no "knack" in some line of work, if you are "short" in some particular way, and you come across some one who is "handy" or "long" just there, the probabilities are that you will be filled with wonder and amazement that such person can do what he does so easily, and you will be very apt to leap to the conclusion that he can do everything else just as readily! Before you read further, please stop, just an instant, and think out how these things are in your own particular case. Such brief introspection will help you to comprehend better all that I say hereafter.

What I wish to urge is, that all such conclusions, and such feelings of disgust or amazement, are wrong, though they are as natural as that water should run downhill. The sympathetic feelings of like for like are all right, but not the others.

To make this point clear, I am going to make a few comparisons from some of the cases I have noted.

To make one of the most startling comparisons first,



put the cases of Charles Sumner and Robert Gardenhire side by side. Sumner had no mathematical ability that was worthy the name. Gardenhire could solve, "mentally" and instantly, problems that it would have taken Sumner hours to "figure out," with the chances that even then they would be wrong. Judged mathematically, and by that ability alone, the colored man would be ranked as far the mental superior of the statesman. And yet!

The point I wish to make is that it would be unfair to either party to judge him *wholly* by his lack or excess, by his "short" or "long" ability. Sumner was little more than imbecile, mathematically; but I remember hearing Wendell Phillips, in his lecture on Charles Sumner, tell how, just after he had graduated from Harvard, he made a trip to London; and though at that time he was only "a briefless lawyer," yet his fame as one skilled in the knowledge of the law had so preceded him that the Supreme Judges in England invited him to sit with them as they heard cases in court. And when a very unusual case came before these judges, one of them turned to Sumner and asked him if he knew any similar case in point. To whom young Sumner replied: "Your honor, in such a volume of your own reports, on such a page, you will find a like case!" Think of this reply, and then compare it with what Professor Pierce said to Sumner about his mathematical inability!

As a matter of fact, it will be difficult for the reader to believe this story which Phillips tells of Sumner. It is so far beyond the experience of the most of us that we can hardly realize that it can be true. But I have no doubt of its truth. On his "long" side Charles Sumner was a most remarkable man. On his "short" side we like to draw the veil. So do we all like to hide

our own "short" places! What we ought to do is to be fair in both and in all cases.

In the case of Robert Gardenhire, I have already said that he was a person of very ordinary ability, outside his special characteristic of unusual mathematical strength. Here is his signature, and it shows that he can barely write his name. As a day laborer, in the

*Robert Gardenhire*

simplest sort of work, he could be only moderately successful. Yet is it not true that "one would naturally expect great things" of one who was so "mathematically bright"? Most assuredly this is so.

(There is another point, in this particular case, which, while not germane just here, I cannot refrain from mentioning as of interest from an evolutionary standpoint, and that is, that this young man is a full-blooded negro; at least, he shows not a trace of white blood in his physical appearance. The puzzling question is, from what ancestry did his "longage" come? This is something to ponder over!)

So much was expected from Zerah Colburn that he was sent across the water to appear before the savants of Europe, in the hope that he might reveal something entirely new in mathematical methods. But in this he entirely failed. He could give no account of how he obtained his results, and he was of very limited ability, outside his specialty.

The little girl I have mentioned, who could work such marvels with her crochet hook, was in an idiot asylum, though on the line on which she was "long" she could do what not one woman in a million could ever learn to do. She could not read, and she could not count. And



yet she could crochet an intricate lace pattern from a picture of the piece. I never saw any other human being who could do this without "reading the directions" and "counting the stitches," as the work was done. But this girl could make the lace without reading or counting, though she had never been taught how. She was "born long" on that side. That was the way she was.

And everybody knows that Blind Tom was entirely limited in his mentality, outside of his musical accomplishments. Where he was "born long" he never had an equal. As a child, he showed signs of his rare ability. It was the way he was. But it was useless to try to get much of anything else into him or out of him, to develop him, to any extent, in any other direction than in music. Here, he grew and grew. Here, but not elsewhere.

Did you ever stop to think of the significance of the final chapter in the life of General Ulysses S. Grant? There is no question but that, as a soldier, he was one of the greatest this world has ever seen. There is no need of eulogizing him on that score. But outside of his military attainments, he was a man of very ordinary ability. As a farmer he was a failure, as a statesman he was mediocre, and as a financier he stood at the bottom of the ladder. There is no more pathetic story in all history than the record of the Grant-Ward failure. But it is pity and not blame that one feels towards the great general as the details of that tragedy become known. It is easy to see now that he was a mere child in the hands of an unscrupulous promoter. If he had possessed even ordinary financial insight, he would have known, from the start, that nothing but ruin could result

from the course the firm he was a member of pursued. But, on that side, he was so short that he could not see that King Lear was right when he said, "Nothing can come from nothing." He was a great general. He was weakness itself as a financier.

Or, take some others of the particular cases that I have reported. The woman who could not tell time was a most successful teacher; and the judge who was likewise short was remarkably able in his profession. He was one of the best Greek scholars I ever knew, and as a logician he was invincible. His decisions while upon the bench were almost never reversed, so perfect was his grasp of every point in any case he was called to pass upon.

But now, truly, if you were a school director, and a teacher should make application to you for a position, and you should happen to find out that she could not tell time, would not that fact tend to make you reject her application; would it not almost force you to conclude that she could not possibly be a good teacher? Or, if you had a case in court, would you not hesitate to have it come before a judge who had to ask some one else when it was time to adjourn? You would be far above the average of humanity if you did not brand both these people as "fools."

Yet this teacher was not a fool, nor was the judge a fool, nor was Charles Sumner, nor was General Grant, nor was Louis Agassiz, or any of the rest. They were simply "short" where others are "long," and it would be entirely unfair and unjust to them to judge them from their "short" sides.

The fact is, we are all both "born long" and "born short" on some lines.



And beyond doubt this also is true, that, where one is born very "long" on some one line, such a person is quite apt to be very "short" on some other line, and *vice versa*. This is true of all the cases I have just been considering in detail. But it is equally true that the great bulk of humanity have, each and all, their "long" places and their "short" places, their natural bents of mind.

To emphasize what I have just said, I cannot help noting some further details of the cases mentioned. I want to make it very plain that people who are very "short" in some regards are by no means weak in others; and also to prove that they have a right in the procession, often in the front rank.

I wish I could give you the name of the teacher who cannot tell her right hand from her left without special mental effort. She is a woman who has made a national reputation in her primary work, and in that line she has no superior, anywhere. And so of the college president who has a touch of the same shortage. Should I write his name here, you would recognize it at once as that of a man who has been honored by the teachers of this country as only a very few men have ever been. He worthily stands in the front rank among the educational leaders of America. So, too, of the LL.D. who cannot spell. His name is famous on more than one continent.

Why is it, then, that I must not mention the names of the people spoken of in this last paragraph? The answer is easy. They are all living, and if their names were told it would greatly lower them in the esteem of many people who know them. If I were speaking of *where* they are "long," I might sound their names with

a trumpet, and the chances are that all who heard would hasten to conclude that they were "intellectual giants," every one, and in every way. But if I tell of where they are "short," their names must be concealed. I shall return to this fact later and note its further significance. Meantime, let the reader note it well, and be cautious as to the conclusions he forms from the comparisons he makes when considering the "shortages" and "longages" in his fellow men — and in himself!

## CHAPTER IV

### NASCITUR NON FIT

The Maxim too Narrow — The Universality of Congenital Gifts and Deprivations — The Way we are — Genius *vs.* Hard Work — “Winners” must have Native Ability — The Real Basis of Success in any Given Calling — Cases in Point — Locomotive Firemen — Merchants — Square Pegs and Round Holes — Training *vs.* Creation — Real Estate and Grammar — Virtue and Perseverance — Lincoln’s Advice to a Young Man — Endeavor without Comprehension — Practical Application of the Principle — *Omnes Nascuntur, non fiunt!*

HE was doubtless a wise and observing man who first wrote the words *poeta nascitur non fit*, which, being interpreted, tells us that a poet is born, not made. The only criticism one can make on this remark is that it is too narrow. It not only does not tell half of the story, but it simply mentions a somewhat minor fact which is a part of a general law. For the fact is that *all men are born and not made!*

So far as I have been able to observe, every one who was ever born can do some things much more easily than he can do some other things, and he “always could.” Or, to put it the other way about, it is more difficult for him to do some things than it is for him to do some other things, and it was “always so.” That is, to every individual there are given, from birth, certain abilities to function in certain mental planes; from every individual, from birth, there are denied or withheld certain abilities to function in certain mental planes, and to do the things thereunto related.



Does this proposition seem startling? It surely is so. But the issue is not there. It is really irrelevant whether it be astounding or commonplace. The only question worth while is, what are the facts in the case? These established, the next question is what to do, these things being as they are?

Now I am well aware that it is a popular theory, especially in this "land of the free," that any man can do anything he undertakes to do whether he "has any head" for it or not, if he tries hard enough and keeps trying long enough. This idea has been carried so far as to elicit the statement that even "genius is only an appetite for hard work."

This sentiment may be popular, but the experiences of humanity prove to every thoughtful individual that it is not true. Ask yourself if it has proved true in your own case. Then look about among your neighbors and acquaintances, and see if it has proved true in their cases. Never mind about what "some one says!" The evidences that you and I are aware of are as good as any! Consider these well, and then give an honest verdict.

My opinion is that the net result of your observations will establish the conclusion in you that, while hard work and devotion to business are among the best means in the world for securing success; yet, even they will not bring that result unless the striver and worker has some sort of "head" for what he is trying to do. At least, this is true, that, if one has a head for what he is working for, his chances for succeeding are many fold better than they would otherwise be. Even the admission of so much is all that is necessary — is enough to establish my point.

Now the fact is that if you will go into any walk of life and talk with people who know about the details of that especial way of living and doing — what are the requirements for success therein, and who are worthy to be reckoned as worth while and at the fore,— you will be told by such people who know, that “winners *in our line* must be born and not made!” There is not a single exception to this statement. I have tested it a thousand times, and it always comes out the same way. Try it, and my conclusion will be yours.

And yet, the popular theory is that these things are not so. Every successful man knows that in his special line of work those who are “the real thing” must be born and not made; but he has a theory that the same principle does not hold true in other spheres of labor. Every successful doctor, engineer, architect, farmer, teacher, stock breeder, brick maker, hotel keeper, chicken raiser, rat catcher, musician, cook, sea captain, general, preacher, inventor, author, financier, bookseller, insurance agent, and so on to the end of the line, up or down—all of them who know the details of their business and who are successful therein, to a man, will say, when speaking of their own line of work: “The winners in our line must be born and not made.”

In investigating these phenomena, I have been surprised beyond telling to find how far-reaching this principle is. There are lines of life that have seemed to me so simple and elementary that any one could master their requirements, especially if he tried hard to do so. But even here I have found the “born and not made” principle positively in evidence.

I was talking once with a railroad manager whom I overheard telling one of his “traveling engineers” to

look after a certain fireman on his division, and I heard him say: "If he can't learn to do it, you'll have to let him go." And I said: "Can't learn to do what?" To which the manager replied: "To shovel coal into the fire box!"

"Do you mean to say," I asked, "that it is possible that a man can be found who can't learn to shovel coal into a locomotive furnace?"

And this is the answer I got: "Sure! It is only about one in four who try to do it that can learn to do it right." And then he added: "A fireman has to be born, he can't be made!"

I had no idea that so apparently simple a matter as shoveling coal into a fire box demanded initial aptitude for such work, and I am quite certain that many who read these lines will pooh-pooh the statement. But if they will inquire of the men who know about such things, they will find it is only a plain, unvarnished tale that I have unfolded.

And so it is in any line of work that may be named. The universal complaint amongst all classes of employers is that they cannot find people who have initial ability to do the work required of them. (I know a merchant who hunted the country over before he found a man who could do up packages to suit him.) It is said that only about four in one hundred who enter the mercantile profession succeed in that calling. Ask any successful merchant why these fail, and he will tell you that they have no "head" for such work. The chances are that he will add: "A merchant must be born, he can't be made." And it is true.

And so it is everywhere. The born-and-not-made principle is universal.



Of course, there are many people, probably a large majority, who can do more than one thing well. There are not a few who are exceedingly versatile. But even the best of these have their "short" places; there are things they cannot do well, — things they have no initial ability to do, and which, if they are wise and are aware of their "shortage," they will not try to do. Think how it is with you.

Under which circumstances, I beg to submit that I believe it to be universally true that any individual will succeed best in doing work that he has a natural "head" for, that he was "born long" on, that he has initial ability to do. On the other hand, no individual can successfully *compete* in any calling in which he is "born short," is not apt in, has no "knack" in pursuing. All of which is only saying that a square peg will not fit and fill a round hole as well as a round one will.

But, it is contended, if the hole is round and the peg is square, make the peg round! To which I answer, it all depends on the nature of the peg as to how successfully this can be done. And I might add that many a good square peg has been ruined in trying to make it round, and *vice versa*. The truth is, that, so far as human nature is concerned, it is far harder to make a natural shortage long than is generally conceded; especially is it very much harder than some teachers and most professors of pedagogy generally will admit. There are reasons for this, which will be considered later.

It is true, of course, that training can do much to increase efficiency, that culture can augment native power. What is not true is the claim that training and culture can create, *de novo*, abilities that are not inborn. Here is a fundamental psychological fact whose truth is

generally denied in the pedagogical profession. And yet, so far as each individual who reads these lines is concerned, each one knows that the experiences I have stated are true in his or her case. Think, here, of your own experiences in this regard.

I was talking, only last evening, with a very successful real estate agent of my acquaintance. We were speaking of "shorts" and "longs," and he said: "I think I was 'short' on grammar. I graduated from the high school, but I didn't know a thing about grammar then, and I don't know now. I couldn't tell a verb from a noun now, to save my life. I was a good guesser, and I guessed my way through that study, from start to finish, so that they passed me, somehow. But I believe I could have been made to learn grammar if my teacher had gone at me hard enough," he went on to say, "and I'll tell you why. One evening my teacher made me stay after school to learn the list of pronominal adjectives. Now I have no more idea what a pronominal adjective is than the man in the moon. I hadn't then, and I haven't now. But there was a game of ball called for half-past four that evening, and I had to pitch it, and I knew that my teacher meant business and that that list of words had to be learned before I could get out. The result was that I learned the list in twenty minutes, and I can repeat it to this day, though that was thirty years ago." And then he repeated the list to prove his words.

And I said: "Have you ever made any use of this list of words in the thirty years you have been able to repeat them?"

And he replied: "No, but I learned 'em! And if I could be made to learn them, why not the rest of the grammar?"



Upon which I thought, *cui bono* ? but I said not a word. Silence is sometimes golden.

Later, this same man told me that, in the hundreds of deeds he had written in connection with his real estate business, not once had he ever gone to a record to find out the description of any piece of land he was deeding. He said : "Whenever I handle a piece of land, the first thing I do is to get my foot on it, to see just where it is ; and, after that, I can always remember the description of it. In the hundreds of deeds I have written I have never looked up a record, and I have never made a mistake."

Then I asked him if he thought he could write a grammar in a similar way, and with equal accuracy ? Whereupon he laughed me to scorn, and said : "If I should live to the age of Methuselah, and study grammar all the time, I don't think I should ever know enough about it to give an intelligent opinion on the subject."

I asked him if he thought he could have competed successfully as a grammar maker or teacher, and then *he* was silent. There are times when "only silence is fully expressive."

I have taken space and time to report this case fully, because it is so perfect a type of a widely distributed feeling and belief amongst multitudes of people. To this man it seemed an easy thing to write deeds as he did, to remember the exact description of every piece of land he had ever handled. He told me he believed I could do it, that I surely ought to be able to, since I could repeat a poem of sixty-four lines from hearing it once ! But when I asked him why he did not remember poetry as well as he did descriptions of land, he replied : "I wasn't born that way !"

And I said : "The argument is closed."

This man is a successful real estate agent because he can utilize, in that business, his excess of ability to function in a mental plane that fits his business perfectly. In such a line of work I should have failed ignominiously. I could not, to-day, give a description of the piece of land I have lived on, though I have paid taxes on it for a quarter of a century, and so have seen a written description of it at least once a year for that length of time. I was not born to remember data of that sort, and no amount of training could fit me to compete in the real estate business with a man who has such a head for that sort of thing as my friend has.

Here, then, is my conclusion, namely, that experience proves that it is not wise for any man to base the motive of his life work on the theory that he can do one thing just as well as he can another, if he only tries hard enough and keeps trying long enough. The sane thing to do, in every case, is for each individual to take account of his own initial abilities and inabilities, where he is "short," and where he is "long," and plan his life work accordingly just as far as his environment will permit him to do so.

The fact is, there has been any amount of false teaching on this point, to the effect that the harder it is for one to do any particular thing the more virtue there is in doing just that thing, and the greater will be the returns to the doer in the way of added strength and increased ability. It is true that added strength comes from overcoming resistance, to a certain degree; but there is a limit to the principle, and that limit is reached when the person attempting to overcome such resistance has not enough understanding of the situation to attack intelligently the forces against which he strives.



There was great sense in the words Mr. Lincoln once wrote to a young man who asked him to map out his life's work for him. Lincoln wrote: "An *intelligent* perseverance is the surest guarantee to success in life." That tells the whole story. It is not only essential to persevere, but to do so intelligently. And when a person is born so short in a given line that he has no intelligence to bring to bear on the issue, his struggles to succeed lead only to disgust and despair. Such a person simply strikes blindly, and he is just as liable to wound himself as he is to break down the barriers he is trying to hurl himself against. The pity of it all is beyond telling, and we have all seen such cases, time and again. Fortunate are we if we have not had many such experiences ourselves. Most of us have had them, to a greater or less degree.

So it turns out that the best results will come to any individual by having him move out strongly, resolutely, in lines of life on which he is "born long," for which he has innate aptitude, where he has an excess of ability to function in the particular mental plane involved.

The world has no use for blunderers; and he who tries to run without eyes to see where he is going will surely fall into the ditch. The wise thing to do is to test one's vision before beginning the race, and to be willing to accept the verdict of such bringing to the proof. If that shows you are blind, then do not try ways that require eyesight as a requisite for success therein. Test ears, hands, voice, everything — find out where you are "short" and where "long," and then true your life work by your native ability, just as far as it is possible for you to do so.

The color-blind boy of my youthful acquaintance



never made an artist. He could not. Neither did the little monotone girl become a singer. She could not. General Grant did not become a financier. He could not. Sumner did not become a mathematician. He could not. My real estate friend did not become a grammarian. He could not. I have never glistened as a Latin and Greek scholar. I could not. You have never ----- (fill this line out to suit your own case). You could not. You were not born that way. Neither were any of the rest of us born to do the things we have not native wit enough to work at intelligently.

And so the man who wrote *poeta nascitur, non fit* wrote too small. He should have written *Omnes nascuntur, non fiunt*. (I got a friend who is "long" on Latin to universalize this sentence for me, so I think it is right, though I cannot say it is, of my own knowledge.)

I shall return to some of the issues involved in this chapter, in a later part of this book, but I have said enough here to serve present purposes.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE ?

Pertinence of this Query — Glass and Copper as Electric Conductors — How, not Why, the Issue — A Tentative Hypothesis — Mental Functional Ability determined by Bodily Conditions — What is the Human Mind ? — The Mind one Thing, and the Body another Thing — The Body a Means through which the Mind functions — The Brain a Machine which the Mind uses — An Analogy — Musician and Piano — Mind and Body — The Nervous System and other Bodily Organs — Relative Value of these as Factors in Mental Functioning.

PERHAPS some of my pragmatic readers may remark as they note the heading of this chapter : " Never mind how it is that these things are. If they are, they are, and that settles it. What is the use of speculating as to the *modus operandi* in the premises ? "

To which I reply that a study into the way things work has resulted in great good in this world. It is true that no one ever has, or ever can arrive at the absolute ultimate cause of any phenomenon, physical or otherwise. No one can tell *why* it is that copper is a good medium for conducting a current of electricity while glass is not. Yet a knowledge of these facts is really worth while, and to ignore them is worse than folly. One would hardly sin should he say that any man is a fool who should attempt to force an electric current through glass, or who should try to insulate himself with a casing of copper !

If we can find out how things are, how the forces that do things work, there is a possibility of our con-

trolling the action of such forces, in a measure, at least, and of utilizing for good what might otherwise be harmful or fatal. Franklin's fundamental discoveries as to *how* lightning behaved have led to great results. No one has ever found out *why* lightning does as it does, but the knowledge of *how* it does is of value.

It is not impossible that a speculation regarding the phenomena of "shorts" and "longs," as exhibited in humanity, may also lead towards something worth while. It is for such reason that I present this and the immediately following chapters. In doing so, I am not claiming that I am a second Franklin. All I am anxious to do is to seek for the truth as Franklin sought for the truth.

Now, I am not much given to speculation, and yet, as the years have gone on, and as I have observed so many hundreds of these "long" and "short" cases, I have been forced to formulate some theory as to the how and wherefore of these widespread phenomena. And while, frankly, I have not as yet arrived at any positive conclusion in the premises, yet I have a tentative hypothesis which I am going to set down here, with the hope that the reader will help to verify or to disprove it.

In a word, then, I am very strongly inclined to the belief that these wide variations in individual make-up are, for the most part, at least to an extent far beyond what has generally been supposed, seated in the body — that they are the result, in most cases, if not in every one of them, of body differences, and not of ultimate mental differences, in the individuals in which they manifest themselves. I am not yet prepared to say, positively, that this is so; but I do say, quite emphati-



cally, that I very strongly suspect it is so, and that the longer I live, and the more generally and closely I observe the phenomena involved, the more I am confirmed in the correctness of my surmise. Some of my reasons for so thinking are as follows:—

Of course, the whole issue turns on the basic question as to what the human mind really is, and this is not an easy thing to find out. The wisest men of all the ages have had their theories about it, and they have differed on this point as far as the poles are sundered. I have neither the time, space, strength, nor patience to attempt here any resumé of what all these have thought, written, and said; still less do I flatter myself that I am wiser than any one or all of these; or that I can make as clear as daylight that which so many before my time have only succeeded in making cloudy. But I have a few ideas to submit for you to think about, and to have you bring to the proof, to the best of your ability. For, as has been well said, "a theory, to be of any account, must tally with the amplitude of the whole earth"; and you and I and the facts that we can present are a part of that amplitude.

In the first place, then, my own experience with myself (and that is a good place for us all to begin) and my observations of my fellow men lead me to believe that the body is one thing and that the mind is another, and a wholly different thing. How do you feel about that, dear reader? How does it tally with your own experience in the premises? I don't care even to ask how it tallies with what you may have been taught, or have learned from books, or have been led to think, from any other source than your own ultimate self. All *I am* anxious about is, how it squares with your own

experiences and observation. Settle that, and then we will move on.

I, personally, am fully convinced that the body and the mind are not one and the same thing. They are different things, and each plays its separate part in the phenomena in question. To me, the body is merely a means through which the mind expresses itself in time and space. It is a machine which the mind energizes and causes to act. It is a medium through which the mind functions; and the lack or excess of ability of the mind to function in any given plane depends upon the perfection of the medium as a means of transmitting the mind force in that particular field.

I am not a materialist. I do not even believe that "the liver secretes bile"; much less do I believe that "the brain secretes thought." I would rather say that the brain is the means through which the mind makes thought manifest, just as the liver is the organ through which bile is made manifest. In either case it is a force other than the organ itself which functions through the organ, or causes the organ to function.

The best guess that I can make about the combination is, that the thinker, — the mind, the ego, or whatever else you may choose to call it, — that which is the real self, — that this is the power behind the throne, as it were, and so is the ultimate cause of all those manifestations that come to the surface through the human body. These things make me believe that the body is only the machine through which the mind acts. It is the medium by means of which the ego can express itself in time and space.

I know that analogy is a dangerous guide to go by, but I use one here at a venture, not for the sake of



trying to force a point, nor insisting that it is wholly conclusive, but in the hope of more clearly illustrating, perhaps, what I am trying to say.

A musician and a piano are not one and the same thing. Each uses the other, each is of value to the other. But the piano is only the machine through which the musician expresses himself, — makes himself, his art, manifest in time and space. There is no music in the piano, *per se*. The music is all in the musician who sits at the instrument.

But, no matter how good the musician who sits at the piano may be, if the instrument be imperfect or unstrung, he can get no music out of it. You may say, "turn your figure around, and then see what comes of it; namely, no matter how good the piano may be, if the player is a fool he will make no music." You have a right to ask me to turn the figure around, and I will do so. But first, let me take it my way, for a while. I will consider it the other way around later on.

I have come, then, to think of the mind and the body as related to each other something after the manner of the musician and the piano. The mind plays upon the body, uses it, makes itself manifest through it. And, just as the strings and keys of the piano are nearest in touch to the musician, are the parts of the machine that he is most in contact with, so the brain and the nervous system of the body are nearest to the mind, and most directly connected with it. It is through these physical organs that the mind acts. All the other parts of the piano sustain the strings and the keys, and make them available for their especial work. All the other parts of the body sustain the brain and

the nervous system, and make them available for their especial work.

I do not wish to carry the analogy too far, but I believe that it can be pushed safely one point farther. For instance, some of the comparatively less essential parts of the piano may be in bad shape, or altogether wanting, and still the piano may be made to discourse fairly good music. A leg may be broken, or the cover cracked, or the ivory from a key altogether gone, and still the essentials of the instrument may not be much affected. But if the peg, or hammer of a key be wanting; or, worse than this, if a string be run down or broken—then there can be no music gotten from that piano, so far as that key or that string is concerned. You may use other keys and other strings, on this same instrument, and get as beautiful tones as ever came from a musical machine; but as soon as you touch the broken key, or the untuned string, you get only discord, or no response whatever for your stimulative effort, which, under right conditions in the instrument, would produce harmony.

Good people, so far as my own experience goes, and so far as my observation among my fellow men extends, the analogy holds good, so good that I feel almost as though there could be little need of saying anything further upon the subject. To me it seems clear that this relation between the musician and the piano is almost perfectly typical of that which exists between the mind and the body. And yet, to make myself thoroughly understood, I shall have to go somewhat more into detail in considering the human side of the comparison.

In the first place, it is now a well-known fact that



the brain and the nervous system of the body are the especial organs through which the mind more immediately acts. This is particularly true of the brain, and to a large extent of the nervous system. More than this, the most recent discoveries regarding the functions of the brain have proved that certain parts of this organism are especially related to, or have specially to do with the reception and translation of stimulative forces that affect the body from without. That is, there is a certain part of the brain that has to do with the sense of hearing, another with the sense of sight, another with the taste, another with smell, and so forth. If you remove one of these special parts of the brain (and such often have been removed, or made ineffective by accident, or knife, or disease), it is no longer possible for the sensation which that part of the brain has to do with to be experienced at all. Thus, if the part of the brain which has to do with sight is removed, or rendered inoperative in a given individual, it is no longer possible to see. No matter how perfect the eye of that person may be, he cannot see. And so of any part of the brain having to do with the other bodily sensations. If any part is wanting, or imperfect, it is impossible for normal results to be obtained for the individual, wherever these faulty places appear.

Further, not only may imperfect results come from bad brain conditions, but the same unfortunate experiences may arise from the failure of the nerves and nerve centers to do their appointed tasks. Thus, a nerve may be diseased, or paralyzed, or its proper blood supply interfered with, so that it cannot work normally, and under such conditions it is impossible for the individual suffering from such malady to do what could

easily be done but for these obstructions. If, in a given case, the nerves of the eye are in bad condition, the person who tries to use the eye cannot do so successfully; his sight will be more or less affected, according to the degree of the imperfection in the nerve system involved. No matter how perfect the eye itself may be, if the nerves are imperfect there can be no clear sight. The whole body will be full of darkness. And so of any other organ; if its nerves are bad, it is impossible for it to do what it could do under normal conditions.

Or, go a step farther. If other parts of the body, — the bones or the muscles which support the nerves and brain, — if these be imperfect, or interfered with to a sufficient degree, such disturbance will affect the normal working of the mind through its medium. If the skull be crushed, the brain is made inoperative. If the muscles that make the heart beat should be cut, or made powerless in any way, it is needless to say that the effect of such physical injury would be at once manifest in the mental functioning power of the person suffering from such a cause. Of course both these illustrations are at the extreme of possibilities in their respective directions; but I have purposely chosen them, so that there could be no chance for doubt or question in the premises. No one will dispute that a person with a broken head or a still heart will be unable to do very much clear and definite thinking. And that is the point I am after just now. I take it that so much is settled.

But now note that all the organs that I have mentioned — the brain, the nerves, the bones, the muscles, etc. — are all of the body. They all correspond to the various parts of the piano — the strings, keys, sounding



board, framework of the instrument, etc. My point is that, just as, when some essential part of a piano is imperfect, or what it should not be, or altogether wanting, it is impossible for the musician to get good music from the instrument; just so, when some essential part of the human body is imperfect, or what it should not be, or altogether wanting, it is impossible for the mind to get good mental results through such a body.

Having said which, my readers may ask: "Yes, but how does it happen that we have imperfect bodies to begin with? Why are bodies brought into this world only partly made up?"

And the only answer I can make to such a legitimate question is that I don't know! Neither do I know of any one who does know! As I have said at the beginning of this chapter, there are limits to human knowledge, and a veil of mystery always closes down beyond the limits of finite vision. True, this obscure and tantalizing barrier has been cleared away by modern scientific research at many points that were once counted as impenetrable; and the enthusiastic labors of those who are now engaged upon the problem of eugenics give promise of doing something towards helping humanity to be better bodied from the outset some time. Let us hope that this may be the outcome of such endeavors.

Meantime, it is only fair to say that, so far as this treatise is concerned, all this "related matter" is "another story," as Mr. Kipling says; and, being so, it is beyond the province of the issue I am discussing to consider it at all.

I would begin and go forward from the point where the eugenic researcher begins and goes backward. He

strives to discover how bodies may be made better before they come into this world. I would try to find the best ways of handling such bodies as we now have in stock, at this present now, so as to get the best results for those who inhabit them, through the already furnished physical media for mental functioning. The two problems are entirely distinct, and they must be worked out each in its own way.

My theory is that bodily conditions, especially such as obtain at birth, greatly modify, limit, and determine mental functionings. I have already given some proofs to substantiate this position; but more evidence, especially on certain points, is needed to carry the argument to the point of positive conviction. I believe that I have such evidence in hand, plenty of it, and shall produce it in the following chapters. Then I shall proceed to consider what such facts and conditions as I have established have to do with our attempts to educate all the children of all the people.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME CASES IN POINT

Localization of Functional Parts of the Brain — The Emotions — The Spiritual Powers — Idiots not "Feeble-Minded" — Limitlessness of the Ego in All Mankind — The Ability to function mentally limited by the Body — Proofs of the Proposition — Congenital and Adult Cases — Why Eyeglasses are worn — The Tangled Telephone — Conditions of Insanity — Dr. Bucke's Experiments upon Insane Women.

WE can now safely take the next step in this study, namely, that not only is it true that certain definite parts of the brain have specially to do with receiving and transmitting the bodily sensations of hearing, sight, taste, and the rest, as noted in the last chapter, but that it is probably equally true that the same conditions exist with regard to the subtler phenomena that have to do more particularly with the mind itself — the emotions and all the higher forms of mental expression. Thus, it is now a thoroughly established fact that a certain part of the brain has specially to do with the faculty of speech; or, perhaps better, that speech is given expression through the use of a certain part of the brain. If this part of the brain be injured or diseased, the faculty of speech will be affected to a greater or less degree thereby. If it be entirely removed or paralyzed, speech becomes utterly impossible. And it has been demonstrated that such a part of the brain can be removed, and still the patient may live.

*It is impossible to go as fully into details on this part*



of my theme as its importance really demands and as I should be glad to do if space permitted. There are volumes to be written on this branch of the subject alone. Several such have already been written, and more are coming, all the time. There are undiscovered countries, and unmapped regions, right here, that it is to be hoped will be found out and exploited in the not distant future. But the illustration just given puts us on the track of what we are pursuing.

Entering a higher and still more subtle field of mental activity, it has now become a very general conviction among psychologists that there are parts of the brain that have to do especially with memory, particularly with some phases of memory. These convictions are based upon well-established cases of people who have suffered complete loss of memory, or of some particular memories, as the result of injury or disease of the brain. Such cases are not uncommon; and often, where there has been such loss or eclipse of memory for a time, it has been made good again upon the restoration of the affected parts of the brain to normal conditions.

Reasoning on the inductive basis from the facts just recited, it is surely a most natural inference that still other parts of the brain have to do with yet higher mental functionings—the feelings, the emotions, the spiritual sensibilities, and all the more subtle activities of the mind. For here, also, brain injury has often resulted in a change of mental expression in these particulars. It is a matter of common knowledge that hope has been stimulated or depressed, jealousy aroused, despair produced, devotion or worship incited or inhibited, and so following, by some physical change



made in some part or parts of the brain. Certainly this is true, that there must be cerebral action in connection with these mental activities or we should not be conscious of them; and while the brain centers which have to do particularly with such phenomena have not as yet been definitely localized, the presumption is all in favor of their existence. Just as the atom and the electron have never yet been seen by human eye, but their reality can nevertheless be safely predicated; so the fact of the control of all mental expression by certain parts of the brain, all in due order, may, with equal saneness, be at least inferred.

Anyhow, I am so well convinced of the probability of the truth of this theory that I have based a mental hypothesis upon it; and the more generally I have observed the phenomena that this supposition is set to explain, the more I am convinced that my position is solid and sound.

Now, with this theory as a basis, namely, that the ability to function mentally is largely determined by bodily conditions, in particular those that the thinker has been born with, it follows, first, that we have no use for the word "feeble-minded." It is a misnomer. Mind is never feeble; but bodies are poor, or half made up, or sometimes almost altogether bad. The word "idiot" is a good word, in its original sense. It is the Greek word for "peculiar"; and, as primarily applied to a human being, meant a peculiar person, and that was all. And the fact is, we are *all* more or less—peculiar.

It seems to me this way: The ego, the ultimate self in each one of us—in you, whoever you are, in me, in any and all, I leave out none—this ego is absolutely *limitless*. I believe that in you, whoever you are, in

your ultimate self, there are limitless powers and abilities, latent but none the less real, ready and waiting to express themselves, if only the bodily organs are sufficiently perfect to permit of their functioning through them. But—

While all these qualities and powers are resident in every human mind and are a part of it, yet it by no means follows that they can all be expressed by each and every individual who possesses them. On the contrary, only such of them can find expression, in any given individual, as the brain, the nervous organism, and the other physical apparatus render possible in that particular person. There is the sum and substance of the whole issue, to the utmost limit.

Because, you see, whatever may be true regarding the freedom of the abstract, or the ultimate human mind, this is certain and sure: That, *conditioned in the human body, that mind is limited in its expression by the body in which it lives.* It can only function in such mental planes as the physical organs through which it must act render possible. Drive a good stake there, and you can safely tie to it, I am very sure.

If you have no eyes, you cannot see. But the ability to see, if you had eyes—that is an inherent power that you possess, and that you cannot be robbed of. If you cannot see, the fault lies in your body. At least, that is the way it seems to me.

Take the case of the girl mentioned, who was born blind. For the first few years of her life she was wholly unable to see, not because she was not possessed of the innate ability to see, but because the physical organ of sight was imperfect in her case. A skillful physician remedied this defect, and just as soon as her eye was



made single, her whole body was made full of light. Does it not seem clear, in this case at least, that she had the ability to see, from the first, and that the only reason why she could not exercise that ability was because an imperfection in her body interposed a barrier which this ability could not pass?

In further considering this phase of my theory I shall not confine myself to "born so" cases, but shall extend my observations to the variations in mental phenomena and inability to function mentally that appear when bodily changes come to, or are made in, adults. All these cases are germane, in that they all tend to establish the truth of my main contention, that "these things are in the body." This is my reason for extending the field of my observations into the adult realm.

Thus, to begin at home, as I sit here writing I have a pair of glasses astride my nose. I have to have them, or I cannot see the marks I make on the paper under my hand. But now, why is it that I cannot see without the glasses, and can see with them? Have I myself, in my inmost essential being—have I lost the ability to see when these glasses are in their case? Not at all. I have as much ability to see now as I ever had, probably more. But these eyes of mine have been so much used that they are getting worn out and have to be repaired, artificially reënforced, or I cannot see. The trouble is in my eyes, not in me at all. And so it is wrong to say I can no longer see well. That is not the way to put it. I should say that my eyes have so changed that I can no longer use them, that I cannot function through them, that they fail to convey to me true sensations of what they once correctly reported. It is a physical organ, and not a mental lack, that is at fault.

And sometimes eyes are, from the first, much worse than mine are now. Sometimes they are altogether wanting. But the ability to use eyes, when they and their physical belongings are all present and in good working order, is never wanting in a human being.

You take down the receiver of the telephone some morning and put it to your ear, and you get no response. What is wrong? Has electricity ceased to be, and has magnetism lost the power of attraction? Not at all. These forces are as potent as they ever have been, or as they ever will be; but there is something wrong with the instrument through which they are set to work, in this given case. There is a bad connection—a break, a crossed wire somewhere. The current cannot function through the medium as at present adjusted. That is all. Put the instrument right, and your telephone will work as perfectly as ever again.

So in a case of adult insanity. Here is a person who has been rational for years, but one day he becomes insane. What is the matter? Is there anything wrong with his mind? Not at all. The man himself, the essential mind of the man, is all right; but something has happened to the body through which the man has to make himself manifest. The nervous wires are crossed somewhere, or a brain connection is broken, and the mind force can no longer come through. If these breaks could be mended, the man would be sane again; he would "come to himself" once more.

To any one who has studied the phenomena of insanity, it seems to me there can be no doubt that this malady is seated wholly in the body. I knew a woman who was hopelessly insane for twelve years. At the birth of her second child she had puerperal fever, and



this resulted in insanity. For twelve years she was in an asylum, and for a considerable portion of that time she was a raving maniac. By a change in the management of the hospital a new physician was placed in charge of her case, and his diagnosis was to the effect that her trouble all lay in some abnormal condition of the reproductive organs. Pursuant to this theory, he caused the patient to be submitted to a surgical operation, out of which she came sane, and she has remained sane ever since, a period of some fifteen years.

Can anything be clearer than that, in this case, the whole trouble was seated in the body? Here was a woman who had been sane, who had a "brilliant mind," as the phrase goes, and who had been able to use it satisfactorily till she was twenty-five years old. Then she became insane, and for twelve years she was wholly unable to use her mind in any normal way. Then came a bodily change, caused by a surgeon's knife. As soon as the woman came out from under the influence of the chloroform which rendered her unconscious during the operation, she was as sane as she ever was. Do you think a case like this proves nothing? It seems to me it proves something. At least it is wonderfully suggestive, so far as my theory is concerned.

Of course this case just quoted is by no means an isolated one, as all who are familiar with the subject are well aware. I must not dwell on this phase of the subject too long, but I must push it a little further.

There lies before me an essay on this exceedingly suggestive theme, prepared by the late Dr. R. M. Bucke, who was for years in charge of the Insane Asylum at London, Ontario, Canada. This essay is entitled, "Results of Two Hundred Surgical Operations on Insane

Women." It was originally published in the *Medical News* for August, 1900. Dr. Bucke was one of the pioneers in physiological psychology, as especially related to insanity, and his essay is a wonderful record of his achievements in that line. I cannot give even a résumé of the essay here, but I commend it to any and all who are interested in that subject. In brief, he tells, in this essay, how eighty-three out of these two hundred women recovered from their insanity after undergoing a surgical operation at his hands. Is not that something in point? Do not facts like these lead us at least very strongly to surmise that what we have been accustomed to call mental troubles are, as a matter of fact, really caused by bodily ills? Do they not tend to prove that it is a bad condition of the instrument, and not the musician's fault, that there are discords in the musical world?

Another very significant fact brought out by Dr. Bucke's essay is this: that where the trouble lay in the diseased condition of some exceedingly vital and highly sensitive organ, which was intimately associated with the mental and spiritual life of the patient, and this ill could be remedied, then, in such case, the chances of recovery of sanity were much greater than when some grosser, less vital, and less sensitive organ was involved. That is to say, if the trouble in a piano lies in a string, or key, and these can be put right, the chances of getting good music from the instrument because of such rectification are much greater than they would be if the source of the evil was located in some grosser part of the combination, and this should be more or less successfully repaired. The analogy may not be perfect, but it is at least suggestive.



And this last stated fact from Dr. Bucke's essay leads me to conclude that the more highly sensitive the bodily organ may be whose abnormal condition causes insanity, in any given case, the greater the probability of recovery if the organ can be put right. All of which means that if surgery of the brain and higher nervous system can be wrought out as successfully as this same art has been developed in dealing with other parts of the body, much may be hoped for in the recovery of insane people, from this source. Indeed, great strides have already been made in this same direction, as there is ample testimony to prove. It is but recently that a case of insane jealousy that ran to the extreme of attempted murder was entirely cured by the removal of a tumor that was pressing upon the brain of the patient. There are many other cases on record, of a similar nature, where some brain trouble has been set right, and the patient who was insane was thereby restored to sanity. This field is comparatively new, as yet, but it is exceedingly interesting and suggestive, and the discoveries thus far made all tend to establish the truth of the theory that insanity is primarily caused by bad bodily conditions, rather than by direct trouble in the mind itself.

This is not an essay on insanity, but I bring this phase of the subject in, just here, because it seems to me to point directly towards the truth of the theory that the varied expressions of individuality in humanity arise from bodily conditions; that the inharmonious conditions of human life result from imperfect instruments, rather than from mental disturbance, as such. The case is not yet fully proved, but there are a great many things that point towards such conclusion. These

adult cases cited all tend to prove that my theory holds good in congenital cases as well. All the difference is that in one set of cases the hampering bodily conditions came before birth, in the other after that event. The cause is the same always.



## CHAPTER VII

### UNDER THE THRESHOLD

The Subliminal Self—Origin of the Theory and Name—Myers' "Human Personality"—The Ability to "come through"—Cases reviewed from this Standpoint—What are the Conditions of Genius—Conditions of Idiocy—"A Fool for a Player"—Idiots All Bad-bodied—All can "come through" on Some Lines—Cranks—Definition of Genius—Geniuses Poor Teachers—Ultimate Mentality *vs.* Ability to Function Mentally.

THIS may be getting into pretty deep water for the lay reader, but I am going a little farther along the way I have been traveling for the last two chapters, at a venture.

The late Dr. F. W. H. Myers, of London, England, who was for years a leader among the mental philosophers and psychologists of Europe, gave to the world the phrase "the subliminal self," which, being interpreted, means the self that is under the threshold, or below the plane of one's normal consciousness. His idea was that there is a great part of one's real self that never, or, at best, but seldom, or in spots, as it were, ever rises into the realm of our conscious being. He made a special study of what he held to be this veritable part of every man's mental make-up, as it manifests itself in dreams, visions, hypnotic phenomena, trance conditions, and the like. The theory he promulgated has since been largely exploited in the line of suggestive therapeutics and mental healing. I wish to direct attention to it in some other realms of human life, especially

such as have to do with the subject I have in hand, namely, education.

Dr. Myers' idea was that all these mental phenomena are produced by an up-rush, so to speak, of the subliminal self, which, for good and sufficient reasons, that cannot be stated here for lack of space, rises into the realm of normal consciousness. Once in that plane, sometimes we can cut under what has appeared from below, and so retain in the normal memory a record of what has come to us in this way. Thus, according to this theory, a dream is only the working out of the part of one's self that is usually below the threshold of normal consciousness, but that, for the time being, wells up above that line.

We are more or less conscious of what this part of ourselves does, in any given case, in proportion as we have more or less definite recognition of any particular dream. Sometimes this up-rush is so pronounced that it leaves a strong impression upon the consciousness, so strong that it will remain in the memory, and in such cases we can tell, on waking, what our dream was. But if the issue from below is less strong, we only remember that we have dreamed. His theory is exceedingly interesting, and he has recorded great numbers of instances to substantiate his position. If you are interested in this sort of thing, get and read his great work on "Human Personality."

Now it seems to me that, in large degree, this theory of Dr. Myers' makes for the hypothesis I have espoused. In any event, it has led me to make some educational speculations. And here is the possibility that has suggested itself to me:—

Experience leads me to believe that it is highly prob-

able, to say the least, that this subliminal consciousness of ours, which Dr. Myers holds to be by far the greater part of our ultimate selves, of everybody's ultimate self, exists in measureless supply in each one of us; and that it is unceasingly striving for expression in time and space through the medium of the body — "the round of flesh that walls us in," as Browning has it. Here, in a given case, it acts upon a mechanism of the body that is suited to its needs, and so can come through. There, in the same body, it comes up against an impassable barrier, in the shape of an imperfect or altogether wanting physical organism, and so has no means of making itself manifest. This occurs to me as being at least possible (and I think a good deal more than that), and for some years I have been observing mental phenomena and trying to make out how nearly this theory will account for them. And the more I observe and ponder, the more I am inclined to believe that this theory is headed in the right direction.

For instance, to recur again to the case of the girl who was born blind. This child had, from the first, the innate ability to see, this being a constituent part of her essential self. But as that power strove to exercise itself, through her body, as it was at her birth, it came up against an impassable barrier in the shape of imperfect eye nerves. The result was that that part of herself which would normally gain expression through sight was made of none effect, and was, as it were, blotted out of existence. This case is a very simple one, but it stands for a great deal.

This same theory holds good in the cases of insanity that I have noted. The fact seems to be that these *people were no longer able to "come through,"* because



of some physical imperfection in their bodies that their minds could not overcome. It also accounts for such phenomena as Robert Gardenhire exhibited. In his case, the physical organism that has to do with the expression of the mathematical part of himself is probably in a most perfect condition; and so, on that side, his subliminal mathematical self can come through without let or hindrance. In the case of Charles Sumner, the probabilities are that this condition was reversed, and the result was that he was able to function but very little on the mathematical side, though it would seem, to the ordinary observer, that he had as much—yes, far more—innate mathematical ability than had this unlettered negro. Does it not look that way? I believe that the fact was that Mr. Sumner's brain was faulty in the part that has to do with mathematical expression, and so he could not come through there, to any considerable degree. He was "born short" there; he was born wonderfully "long" in other ways.

The question is often asked, What are the conditions of genius? According to this theory, we will always have a genius whenever, in a given case, the brain and the nervous organism in the individual are so perfect, on special lines, that the infiniteness of the mind, on these lines, can express itself fully through the media furnished. In these cases there is no hindrance whatever to the complete expression of certain parts of the subliminal self through the physical make-up of the individual body in which that particular ego is conditioned. It goes without saying that absolutely perfect illustrations of this condition are very rare, but most wonderful ones will readily come to mind. Mr. Edison is a most remarkable example, a marvelous one, in his particular

lines of mental functioning. The list might be extended to great length, and in great variety, and I believe the theory would hold good in every case.

Turn now to the other side of the picture, to those people who are the very reverse of geniuses, and whom we call idiots. The theory holds equally well with them. These people are all faulty in body, every one of them; and I have no doubt that if their peculiar physical faults and weaknesses could be traced closely and definitely enough, it would be found that they were all of such nature as to prevent certain functionings of the mind. It is their bad bodies and not their alleged feeble minds that cause their inability to express their real selves to any greater extent.

I will say more about this later, but right here I want to answer the question proposed, some pages back, in which I was asked to turn my piano figure around, and tell what would happen if we had a good instrument, but a fool for a player. Discord and bad music would result, in the case of such a piano and such a player, surely. But, so far as humanity is concerned, no such condition has ever arisen or ever can arise. I challenge the whole world to disprove that statement.

No one ever saw an idiot who had a normally constructed body! In all these cases, the instrument is bad, and where it is bad, bad mental functioning results. On the other hand, not infrequently, and in many ways, there are not wanting pronounced signs that the player is very far from being a fool. Here and there, there is a good string, and on such the musician can play. But so many parts of the instrument may be out of repair or altogether wanting that but little music can be *made*. But that the player can produce harmony at



all shows that it is the instrument and not he that is at fault.

For instance, take the case of the idiot girl who could do such marvelous work in making lace with a crochet hook. Does this ability on her part suggest a weak mind?—a fool for a player? Not one woman in a million could ever learn, with the help of the best teaching, to do what this girl did, with perfect ease, without any instruction whatever. She was an idiot *on some lines*. She was a genius *in one way*. She was a wonderful player where her instrument was perfect enough to permit her to come through. She was terribly hedged in at nearly every other point of her being—points on which most people can come through with at least so much success that they are not particularly noticeable among the general run of humanity.

And what is true of this girl is true of the majority of idiotic people. In almost every case, there will be found some expression of mental functioning which goes to prove that there is no lack of mental ability, in one or more directions. Did you ever know of such a case where it was not often said of the afflicted one, "Oh, he's sharp enough, in some ways?" That is the whole story. These people are not feeble-minded. They are bad-bodied. This girl who could make lace had a queer-shaped head, and every idiot has a bad body, somewhere.

Of course there are cases of this kind where there is almost no expression of mentality whatever, and in these cases the bodies are always bad in the extreme, especially on the brain and nervous-system sides. These very bad bodies almost completely cut the mind off from any possibility of expressing itself; and hence we have, in rare cases, complete idiocy. But I believe that even



these cases are all caused by imperfect bodies, and not by feeble minds.

And what is true of the bodily condition of idiots is very largely true concerning geniuses. Such people are always "peculiar looking." If their genius takes an outré form, so much so that they are called "cranks," you will nearly always find them very peculiar-looking persons, a fact which points towards the correctness of the theory that I am trying to show the reasonableness of.

As I have already remarked, it is sometimes said that genius is merely an appetite for hard work. The statement will not hold. It does not tally with the basic facts in the case. Any attainment that is gained by such a method is very far from being genius, in the true sense of that word. Some of the results reached in this way may resemble those of genius, but the process of their realization is a different thing entirely from the ways of genius itself.

Genius knows its own without direction, in and of itself; and it has ways of arriving at its destination that the common lot of us know little or nothing about, and of which the genius himself can give no account. Zerah Colburn could not tell to any one how he arrived at the wonderful mathematical results which he obtained without effort, nor could Blind Tom explain how it was that he could reproduce a piano selection, half an hour long, after hearing it once played through. All that can be said is, that these people were both "born long," each in his own particular way. They were both true geniuses, of the genuine sort; and I believe it to be a fact that the reason they could do as they did was, not because *they were* mentally stronger than the rest of us, but be-

cause their brain and nervous organisms were so perfect on the lines in which they gave their special expressions of power that there they could come through without a halt.

The best definition of genius that I ever came across is this: "Genius is the unconscious wisdom of people who are otherwise ignorant." To me that states the whole case, perfectly. When genius, the real thing, shows itself in an individual, the most we can say about it is that "that is the way he is." And that the bodily machinery through which such remarkable abilities express themselves determines the extent, or the limitations, of such expression — of this there seems to be little doubt.

(I can't help remarking, just here, because the truth of it is so evident from what I have just said, that a genius, or a person who is "exceedingly bright" in any particular line, is always the poorest kind of teacher, because he can never tell, or explain to another, how he arrives at results. *And to be able to show the way to obtain correct results is the very essence of successful teaching.* Colburn could not teach mathematics, nor could Blind Tom teach music. I merely note the fact, in passing, for it is such a good one for teachers and for people who have to pick out teachers to remember, and one that is so often believed to be true in the very reverse order of its actuality.)

And so this is my theory regarding geniuses and their antipodes, and all of us who are between these two extremes. The way we are does not depend on our ultimate mentality, which is limitless in each and all, but on our ability to function mentally, to get the stream of mentality through the medium it must use if it reveals

itself in time and space. And the range of this ability is determined by the more or less perfect condition of the bodily organ through which such functioning alone can be done. At least, this is how "it seems to me."



## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME DARKER STUDIES

Widening the Field of Observation — Why Adult Cases are studied — Their Bearing on the Issues involved — Mental Errancy and Crime related Phenomena — "Free Agency" and Human Responsibility — A Case of Gambling Mania — History of the Case — Insane Jealousy rectified by Brain Surgery — Criminals "Herds of Incompetents" — Treatment of Criminals and the Insane — Children and their Crimes — Smuggling — Criminals' Views of their Own Crimes — A Lawyer's Testimony — Jesus's View of These — Relative Power to "come through" of Desire and Will — Some Authorities on these Points.

It is curious how fast, how far, and into what unlooked-for regions a theory once started may lead one. And so I find myself just here irresistibly compelled to push at least a little way into a realm that I had not thought of exploring when I first set out. The cases I am about to note are again more of the adult order than of the "born so" variety; but they are strongly in point as regards the main issue. Perhaps they might be counted as acute or temporary instances of conditions that are chronic in congenital cases. My chief reason for presenting them is because they multiply and intensify the proofs that "these things are in the body." Besides that, they will have a direct bearing on the main issue of this book when I reach that part of my story.

And so it is that my investigations and theories as to what is the truth regarding the real, basic causes of genius, idiocy, insanity, and of all similar variations

from what we are wont to consider as normality in humanity, suggest the possibility that the same principles hold equally true regarding the causes of vice and crime, as these are manifest in mankind. That may appear, at first sight, as a very dangerous doctrine to announce, but this is not an issue of danger, or its opposite. The question is, What is the truth in the premises?

Anent which, let it not be forgotten that it is but a few years since insanity was looked upon as a crime, and insane men and women were strapped to the wall and lashed, as a penalty for what was counted as their deliberate wrongdoing.

We talk about human responsibility, man's "free agency," and the like. Such themes are worthy to be considered, but — well, here are some cases that have made me think a great deal regarding such things. Read them, and then see what you think. And be sure that you think, and that you think for yourself.

I once had a friend who served a term in the penitentiary for embezzlement. I make no scruple in saying that he was my friend, my very dear friend, both before and after his incarceration. In many respects he was one of the best men I ever knew. He was truly generous and nobly self-sacrificing; and he was truthful, and thoroughly reliable in most ways. But all the time I knew him he was a gambler. On that side of his make-up he was not to be trusted for an instant. He would gamble on anything, anywhere, at any time. On that point he had no conscience, no prudence, no anything, but an uncontrollable desire to try his luck on the game. He would risk all he had himself, and all that *anybody* else had that he could lay hands on, on the

turn of a card or a throw of dice. That was how he got into the penitentiary. He happened to have a large amount of his employer's money in his pocket one day, and he risked it all, and lost. So he was "sent up."

What about this case? To me the man was insane on that side of his being. There, he could not see things as they really were. He had a mania for taking chances. He was as mad, on the line of gambling, as any patient in an insane asylum is crazy in any other direction.

And I believe this unfortunate condition of his was seated in his body, just as much as is the case in any other kind of insanity. So far as I could learn his early history, he showed no sign of his madness in his earlier years. He was the son of a clergyman who was a man of great ability and of sterling worth. But, as a young man, he suddenly began to gamble. It became an uncontrollable passion with him, and it is not putting the case any too strongly to say that he became gambling mad.

Well, you say, what about it? Was this man not responsible for what he did? Ought he not to be punished for his misdeeds? To which I reply, most assuredly he ought to be kept from injuring himself and other people by the exercise of his mania, just as other insane people have to be kept from injuring themselves and others by reason of their insanity.

As things now are, we "punish" such as him; we brand them as criminals, we heap indignities upon them and expect, by so doing, to rid them of their sins. I blame no one for this; but, to my way of thinking, the day is not so very far distant when we shall look back upon our present way of treating crime and criminals



with as much horror as we would now shudder at strapping the insane to a wall and lashing them till the blood came.

I may be wrong in this, but I don't think I am.

Let me tell a little more of this friend of mine. After he came out of prison, he went to work for me (I was in a manufacturing business then) and he held his place as long as he was able to work at all. He died three years after his term of sentence expired.

He was the best salesman I ever knew. In three years he legitimately earned more than ten thousand dollars, all of which he gave to a brother of his who, at my friend's request, acted as his trustee. That was the way he put himself out of the way of temptation. He would never allow himself to handle a cent of my money. We both knew it would not be safe for him to do so. It would have been unfair and unjust, both to him and to me, to have him try to do so. That way his weakness, his madness lay; and it would have been little short of a crime should a strain have been put on him where we both knew he was not strong.

He gambled, off and on, almost to the day of his death. Sometimes months would pass, during which he would not play; and then, again, he would have days of gaming. But because he kept very little money with him, he held his madness within such bounds that—well, he kept himself out of prison, anyhow.

After his death, an autopsy revealed the fact that for years he had suffered from a tumor on his brain! I may be wrong in my surmise, but I am strongly inclined to believe that this physical disturbance of his nervous system was the real cause of his gambling *mania*. There are many reasons that lead me to this

conclusion, but space will not permit me to state them here. Similar cases have already been noted by eminent authorities who have made a life study of the psychology of vice and crime, and new light in this direction is shining through every day.

I recently read a well-authenticated account of a bookkeeper who suddenly lost his ability to add figures, an art in which he had for years been an expert. A little later he became insane, to such a degree that he was committed to an asylum. There, a tumor was removed from his brain, and he returned to his normal condition, resuming his former position, where he was able to work as well as ever.

Another case was that of a man who suddenly became brutally jealous of his wife without any cause on her part for his being so. This condition continued till he tried to murder her, after which his friends were obliged to have him taken to an insane hospital. There, being relieved from an abnormal pressure upon a part of his brain, caused by some subtle disease, his jealousy vanished, and he regained his former condition of domestic happiness and love.

Now all this does not mean that corps of surgeons could start out with saws, knives, scissors, and scoops, and in a few minutes so trim up mankind, within and without, that there would be no more sin, misery, vice, and crime in the world. But these cases, and scores of others that we all know about, lead one to think that, in large degree, if not altogether, the ills and crimes of humanity are seated in the body, which is my original contention. And, if these things are so, or even so to a considerable extent, they are things for parents and teachers to know about, and to regulate their actions



in accordance with, in attempting to educate all the children of all the people.

This friend of whom I have spoken used to talk to me about his prison experience. He was a remarkably able and intelligent man, keenly observant, and exceedingly wise in his conclusions on nearly all affairs. And he assured me that a very large percentage of the inmates of the prison he was in were incapable of taking care of themselves. "They were simply a herd of incompetents," is the way he put it. I have never forgotten that phrase. It is a statement to remember and never to forget, as one looks at children and thinks of the future.

Can you remember some act or acts of yours, that you did without the least thought that they were wrong, when you were doing them, but which acts were really bad, perhaps very bad? Maybe you say: "But I was too young to know." Count it so. Then remember that there are many people who are always young, or who never can come through on certain lines. Call it "arrested development," or what you will, the fact remains that many people do not, yes, cannot, see clearly the ways in which they go wrong. It may not be so always, but it is so sometimes, is it not? At least you have found it so in your own experience, haven't you? I have. Read Stanley Hall's book on Adolescence for cases on this point.

I am inclined to think that few children have any realization whatever of the enormity of their deeds when they rob birds' nests, or pull the legs off grasshoppers, or the wings from butterflies. Did you ever pluck watermelons that you had never planted, but which you took by the *light of the moon* with great delight, and which you de-



voured without a qualm? And did you feel so very bad about it at the time? Have you ever been abroad and returned with trunks full of things that were dutiable, and then — did you feel so very bad about what you did? Did you look the officer in the eye as you walked past him with the tucks in your skirt stuffed full of undeclared laces — as full as they could be and not show? And did you feel very bad about it, when, relying on the steadiness of your gaze, that same official passed you without a word? Did you feel that you had done anything so very wrong, after all this? Who is it that says, "All women are born smugglers"?

But it is a sin to smuggle, to deliberately break the law of one's country. All people who can see clearly on this side of their being, who can come through there, know that this is so. But there are multitudes of people in this country, both men and women, who do not see it, and who, from the evidence in the case, it would seem cannot see it that way. All of which means that there are many persons in this country who are practically children, or insane, on that side of their lives. They exhibit well marked cases of arrested development, or insanity, in this part of their make-up. *They do not deliberately do wrong.* Their failure is in being unable to realize that what they do is really wrong. They will acknowledge that they have broken a law; but, to them, it is a law, and not themselves, that is wrong. They are "short" in that part of their make-up. Their ultimate moral sense cannot "come through" at these places. Their moral eyes are blind. They cannot see things as they are.

I believe that, as a rule, all thieves feel that way about their robberies. They know that they break laws by

doing as they do; but, to them, the laws are wrong, and not they themselves. For reasons which seem to them sufficient, they, at the time of their misdeeds, feel that they are only doing what they have a right to do, all things considered. This, if they think at all. Many of the worst cases cannot think clearly at all—cannot “come through,” or function in these mental places.

A lawyer who had had an experience of twenty-five years at the bar to base his statement on once told me that he had never been called on to defend a criminal who would acknowledge that he was guilty of the crime with which he was charged, no matter what that crime might be. Such might confess to having done certain deeds, but they would never acknowledge that such doing was wrong. They always had some reason to offer which justified their action, allowing them to be their own judge. In the presence of such testimony, can one doubt that these people have eyes and see not, that there are spots where they cannot “come through”?

Of course they are wrong in all this, when viewed from a social standpoint; and, being so, not seeing things as they are, they cannot be left free to prey upon their fellows; but their attitudes of mind should, of right, be taken into account in the way society deals with such—in the manner in which it makes “the penalty fit the crime.”

Nor do I think that all these have tumor on the brain. In most cases the trouble goes further back than that—they are born so. But I do believe that, in every case, the trouble lies, basically, in the imperfect bodies of these wrongdoers rather than elsewhere. If the brain *and nervous organism* of each one of these derelicts



could be made normal, there is small doubt that their actions would tally with right, and not with wrong.

It is doubtless true that Jesus had such as these in mind when he said: "Seeing, they see and do not perceive; hearing, they hear and do not understand." How wonderfully well the Great Teacher knew humanity. Surely, the noblest prayer that was ever prayed came from his lips, when he said, "Father, forgive them; *they know not what they do.*" The real foundation trouble with us, and with all, always, when we go wrong, is that we do not *really* know what we are doing. Therefore, let us be charitable, both to ourselves and to our neighbors, all over the world. "For such is the kingdom of heaven."

When my wife had read the manuscript of this chapter, she said to me, "I think it must be true that whenever the chance of a desire to come through is stronger than the power of the will to keep it from doing so, then the individual becomes insane!" I think she is right.

Which leads me to add that, as I write these words, there comes to me the report of the suicide of a young man who has been my neighbor for years. He was one of the noblest men I have ever known. He was happily married. His wife is a lovely woman and they have two beautiful children. He was in excellent financial circumstances, and was loved and honored by all who knew him, yet he took his own life. His mother died by her own hand, a few years ago. "The taint is in the blood," we say. And we say well. The physical organism was, I believe, in each of these cases, so faulty, on certain lines, that the desire to die came through stronger than the will to live. The victims were insane, and so



they did as they did. At the coroner's inquest over the death of this young man, the fact was disclosed that his heart-beat rate had always been less than fifty to the minute—was so from birth. Truly, such fact is significant, and in line with my theory.

Surely, for teachers and parents who have to deal with children who go wrong, these cases, and their likes, must give us pause. For so many of us and ours, and the rest, are wont to go wrong—to have desire come through stronger than will comes through, to be insane, at least in spots.

I am well aware that I have only skimmed the surface of the vital themes touched upon in these latest chapters. The literature that discusses them in detail is very voluminous; but it has, so far, reached only specialists, and they, largely, are medical men and not parents and teachers. But because the mental and moral issues involved are so closely linked to the subject I am considering, I have deemed it wise to introduce as much of this related matter as I have in these pages. No teacher is thoroughly equipped for first-class professional work who is not fairly well posted in this particular field of psychological investigation. Its complete mastery is, of course, possible only for the specialist, the subject is so far-reaching. Thus, Havelock Ellis, in his "Studies in the Psychology of Sex," on which he labored thirty years, quotes from more than one thousand authors, ancient and modern, who have made a more or less thorough study of this theme, and it is safe to say that there is scarce an observation in all the mass of testimony which these experts have brought together through the years that is not vitally related to the *problem* we are now considering. My presentation of

the subject is suggestive and not exhaustive, especially in these last chapters. If enough has been said, however, to set the readers to thinking, to have aroused an interest in the theme which will lead to further study of the issues involved, I am satisfied. Let the experts tell you the details through their books and essays which are within the reach of all who care to hunt them out.

Read any one of the many—Stanley Hall, Boris Sidis, William James, Havelock Ellis, or a dozen others to start on,—and then follow the trail they begin for you, and you will arrive. They all produce testimony that is of the highest value for use by any and all who are engaged on the problem of trying to educate all the children of all the people.

## CHAPTER IX

### WHAT FOLLOWS ?

A New View of Humanity — Criminals not to be left to Themselves — Sources of Help towards Better Conditions — A Realization of the Facts in Each Case — Check "Shortages" by making the Most of "Longages" — Love the Chief Factor in Bettering Conditions — Punish but not Kill — McKinley's Assassin — "Criminal Classes" a Misnomer — Lombroso's Theories and Conclusions — Parents and Teachers should specially recognize these Facts — Haste in forming Final Conclusions regarding "Shorts" and "Longs" to be guarded Against — The Qualities may change with Time — Dr. Sperry's Story — The Case of W. J. Stillman.

I AM well aware that this view of ourselves and of our fellow men, of our being "born long" or "born short," here or there, and of our being twisted out of the straight line of right by our bodily conditions, which may be congenital or which may be imposed upon us by accident or disease — I know very well that this way of looking at humanity has not always been foremost in the minds of men, in days gone by; and that, for this reason, very little provision so far has been made for dealing with humanity on this basis.

I believe, though, that Jesus saw the truth in the premises, and that he treated mankind and womankind on the basis of their wrong-goings being seated in the body. If you do not see it that way, read the story of the Thief on the Cross, and of the woman who "was taken in the act," and then see how it seems to you.

*But we cannot let these people who are blind and*



deaf to the right, who are insane and criminal, go where they will and do as they please. Surely not; for so would the blind lead the blind, and all would fall into the ditch. There are such things as right and wrong, and let none ever forget or disregard the fact.

Truth is eternal, and it never swerves.

And right and truth must be taken into account in all righteous living. For righteous living is what all the experiences of life are for. The question is: How can these people who are "born short" in one way or another, or who are idiotic, or insane, or vicious, or criminal because of disease, or accident, or physical harm of any kind — how can these people who are out of the line of righteousness — how can such be brought into line and led to tally with right and truth? That is the chief question of all time. To help solve this question Christ gave his life, and it is only by the giving of life that you, or I, or anybody, can in any way help on its solution. That is the first thing to remember.

But it will help us all, oh so much, if we, first of all, realize the situation; if we have a realizing sense of things as they are, and especially if we keep in mind the way we are ourselves, and by the same token the way our brothers and sisters, and especially our children, are also. That is the true beginning point. Without such a basis to start on, such a foundation under our feet, there can be no progress in the work undertaken.

And so I believe that the first thing for us all to do is, to try to bring ourselves to a clear and full understanding of the fact that we are all of us "born long" on some lines and "short" on some other lines, or that we have been rendered short by accident or disease; and that our possibilities of mental functioning and resultant

doing, in one direction or another, are in very large measure determined by our bodily excellences or infirmities; and, further, that the greatest good will come to each and every one of us by permitting us to move out strongly on the lines of our natural abilities — our “longages” — when these are on the line of right; and, beyond this, where we are weak, or short, or idiotic, or insane, or criminal, all that can be done should be done to help us to overcome our infirmities and difficulties, and to bring us into line with right and truth, all these things being taken into the account.

But, to do this last, let us never be held back where we are naturally and righteously long and strong, in an effort to make us “symmetrical,” that is, equally long and strong everywhere else. That is the whole issue. There is where we have all gone wrong, time and time again, in our treatment of ourselves and of those with whom we have had to do, especially the children. There is where our public schools have sinned terribly. There is where they must stop sinning, if they ever educate all the children of all the people.

What, then, shall we do with these shorts, these idiots, these insane, these vicious ones, these criminals? Well, we shall do the best we can with them and for them, things being as they are. But, first of all, we shall love them, every one, “not with allowance, but with genuine love”; and we shall despise none of them, not even the meanest and lowest. That is, we shall almost entirely change our *mental attitude* towards any and all such people.

Things being as they are, we shall have to “punish” many of them, especially those who exhibit the most *pronounced* cases of waywardness, for a good while



yet; we shall have to shut a good many of them up, and keep them where they cannot harm themselves or others. I do not believe we shall always "punish" in many of the ways we now use, and we ought never to kill any of them.

(It brought my heart into my throat when I read the last words of President McKinley's assassin: "I thought what I did would help the poor people." Could any *sane* man ever have thought that? Is it not clear that this man who took the President's life was blind on that side of his being; that there he could not see things as they really were; that there he was idiotic, or insane?

Of course he and his like cannot be permitted to go about shooting Presidents, or Kings, or Emperors. They must be kept from such exercise of their crazed purposes. But I believe the time will come when such erratics will not be killed. I believe the hour will strike when even such as these will be loved and pitied, rather than cursed and hated; when the way they are will be taken into the account, in passing judgment upon them. I believe that, in his inmost soul, President McKinley had no desire that his assassin's life should be taken. But, as things were, he could only say: "Suffer it to be so now." There are better days ahead of us than have ever yet been.)

Again, it will help us greatly if we can bring ourselves to realize that these variations in humanity that tend towards unrighteousness, these "shorts" of one kind or another, are not confined to any one class of people, to any one stratum of society, or to any one realm of life. In other words, if we are wise we shall come to understand, for one thing, that there is no such



thing as a "criminal class" of people, in the ordinary sense of that phrase.

Doubtless Lombroso and his coadjutors are in large measure right in the things they have written about criminals. But very many of the conclusions that have been drawn from their investigations and writings are altogether wrong. Many of the physical signs of criminality that they have noted are true to the line; but the conclusion that these signs manifest themselves wholly, or in any considerable majority, in any particular class, or branch, of human society — this is entirely wrong. Criminality knows no such thing as class, or rank, or station in life. Such "shorts" are in evidence on every round of the social ladder, in every grade of human life. History gives ample proof that kings there have been who were not exempt, and that beggars have lived who were in like case. Some of the clergy, of the highest rank, have suffered from the same cause, and there have been unbelievers who showed signs of lack in the same direction. In many of these the physical signs of errancy may have showed in much the same way, and in this respect Lombroso is right. The faults were in their bodies, and Lombroso translated the outward showings correctly. But the conclusion that is often drawn, that there is a criminal class that springs from, or is chiefly recruited from, some particular class of society — this is not true.

If this fact is kept in mind, it will clear away a lot of rubbish that often appears in the form of misunderstanding, prejudice, and injustice, in the practical work of parents and teachers who have to deal with all sorts of "shorts" in the family and schoolroom.

*Again, it will help greatly, in a general way, to under-*

stand that *we must not be too hasty in making up our minds as to the "longs" and "shorts" of any given individual, ourselves included.* There are hard and fast lines in these premises, boundaries that cannot be broken over or passed, in every one of us; but we should never be hasty in thinking that we have discovered such as these in ourselves, or in our children, or in our pupils. Good hard common sense, and a diligent, faithful, intelligent study of these things as they really are, in any given individual, will keep us from going wrong here. Only this: keep in mind that we are always to seek for the natural ways of the individual, those that are in the line of righteousness, and to help, to the uttermost, in these directions, knowing that such movement, free and joyous, will always tend to the best interest of all parties concerned. And where there is weakness in any given case, we will do the best we can to help overcome such condition, but never at the expense of retarding what is already strong. If I have one bad leg, it can never be made good by my being prohibited from using my good leg till the bad one is equally sound and usable. That is a fundamental principle, one never to be forgotten.

But, while there are hard and fast lines and impassable boundaries in the make-up of all of us, yet, in large measure, the great bulk of humanity can move out in many like directions, most of which are so common to mankind that we count them as normal. Thus, most children can learn to read, though some can master this accomplishment much more easily than others. As I have already said, I have known cases where the art of reading came so naturally to the child that he never had to be taught at all. I have known other cases where it was



exceedingly difficult to get the pupil to read very much, or very well, even at the expense of a great amount of teaching. In some of these latter cases the pupils were normally strong in other directions; in a few they were exceedingly able in one or more other ways. I have a record of a few instances where pupils could not learn to read at all, and yet they were thoroughly normal in several other ways. The range is almost infinite, here and elsewhere. But, in each and every case, the child should be cared for *according to the way he naturally is*, and not according to some fixed plan that somebody has laid down as the regular thing for all children to attain to. And, above all, as I have said more than once, the child should never be hindered where he is strong, to make good where he is weak.

Again, it sometimes happens in a marked degree, and in most children it is true to a considerable extent, that possibilities, "longs" and "shorts," vary as the child grows. A child is an undeveloped quantity, and its capabilities are not all "worn on its sleeve" from the first. It is for this reason that one should not be too much in a hurry in declaring that a given child is "long" or "short," here or there. But if we keep our eyes open, there is small danger of our going wrong here. There are no Mede-and-Persian laws that will universally apply to the individual soul. Each case must be studied by itself, and action determined according to needs, every time and continually.

And it sometimes happens that very marked changes in the possibilities of a given child may suddenly appear, for good and sufficient reasons. Dr. Sperry, of Oberlin, Ohio, tells of a boy whose case came under his observation, which well illustrates this point.



This boy had been cared for by a charitable institution for some years, but had never been able to learn to read. Finally the manager of the institution came to the conclusion that it was unwise to keep him any longer, as there were no scholarly possibilities for him, and he was filling a place that some more promising child might occupy. So he called the boy and told him that he would have to leave the institution. It nearly broke the poor fellow's heart, and he cried all night about it. In the morning he came down to breakfast with his reading book in his hand, and, going to his teacher, he said: "I can read!" And he could. The doctor says that from that time on the boy learned to read rapidly, and that he afterwards pursued an extended course of study successfully. The case is surely rare, at least few such have ever been reported, but it is very significant, and well worth noting.

One of the most remarkable cases of this sudden change in the possibilities and impossibilities of a child that has ever met my attention is that of the late Dr. W. J. Stillman, as he reports it in his autobiography, which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for 1900, and which, I think, has since appeared in book form. In the first chapter of the story of his life he relates that he was a wonderfully precocious child. He says: "My mother taught me my letters before I could articulate them, and when I was two I could read, and at three I was put on a high stool to read the Bible for visitors, so that I cannot remember when I could not read." He then goes on to tell how he held this pace, so to speak, till he was seven years of age, being counted a prodigy by all the community in which he lived. He read everything that he could lay hands on, and could relate with great

fluency all that he read. But he had a severe attack of typhoid fever when he was seven, "out of which," he says, "I came a model of stupidity, and so remained till I was fourteen, my thinking powers being so completely suspended, that at the dame's school to which I was sent, I was repeatedly flogged for not comprehending the simplest things." (Think of it!) "I got through simple arithmetic as far as long division, and there I had to be turned back to the beginning three times, before I could be made to understand the principle of division by more than one number."

The "intellectual slowness," he says, "continued year after year." He was kept in school (for his parents were anxious that he should become a clergyman), in spite of his mental disabilities. He studied hard, but made little progress worth mentioning. The story he tells of his life for seven years is one of the most pathetic I have ever read. At times it is little short of a tragedy, as witness the following: "It often happened that when a question that had passed the other pupils came to me, the teacher used to address me, 'Well, stupid, what do you say?'" If that is not tragedy, I don't know what is. And yet, I have heard teachers do the like, and so have you.

What follows in his story is so remarkable that I am sure I shall be excused for quoting it at length. The year that he was fourteen he was placed in a boarding school, and of his experience there he writes: "The persistent apathy which had oppressed me for so many years still refused to lift, and my stupidity in learning was such that my brother threatened to send me home as a disgrace to the family. I had taken up Latin again, algebra and geometry; and though I was up by candle

light in the morning, and rarely put my books away till after ten at night, except for meals, it was impossible for me to construe half the lesson in Virgil, and geometry was learned by rote. I gave up exercise in order to gain time for study, and my despairing struggles were misery. I was then fourteen, in the seventh year of this darkness, and it seemed to me hopeless.

"What happened I know not, but about the middle of the first term the mental fog broke away suddenly, and before the term ended I could construe the Latin in less time than it took to recite it, and the demonstrations of Euclid were as clear to me as a fairy story. My memory came back so completely that I could recite poems after a single reading, and no member of the class passed a more brilliant examination at the close of the term than I. At the end of the second term I could recite the whole of Legendre's Geometry, plane and spherical, without a question, and the class examination was recorded as the most brilliant which the academy had witnessed for many years. I have never been able to conceive an explanation of this curious phenomenon, which I only record as of possible interest to some student of psychology."

Such is this most remarkable record, and it surely is of interest to every teacher and parent, even if they have never heard the word "psychology." And it is of still more significance to all who are engaged in trying to educate all the children of all the people.



## CHAPTER X

### AGAIN THE BODY

Theory regarding Dr. Stillman's Case — Questions suggested by such Phenomena — Records of Boy with Crushed Skull — Pupil Blind in one Eye — Other Similar Cases — Persistence of Pronounced Congenital Shortage — Colonel Parker's Protest — Possibilities regarding Idiocy — Whitman on such Manifestations — Erroneous Impressions regarding the extremely "Short" — Schools for Imbeciles to Blame for this — How such "Shorts" should be Considered and Treated — No Great Advancement probable along Lines of Extreme "Shortage" — Value of Progress on "Long" Capabilities in such Cases.

HAVE you any theory as to the cause that underlay this most remarkable case of Dr. Stillman? There must have been a cause, and the case must be accounted for, by any theory that is at all worthy of consideration. Nor does it seem to me that such cause is far to seek. To me it appears more than probable that the variation in the possibilities of this individual, as they appeared, so widely different, from time to time, were all the result of changed *bodily* conditions — that they were all seated in the body and not in the mind.

For, see! First, we have a child who is able to express himself, to come through, to a remarkable degree, — far beyond the average. At seven he is sick unto death with a disease that is noted for the changes it makes in the bodily condition of those who recover from its malignant attacks. Here, surely, is a change *of the body*, rather than of the mind. Out of this ex-

perience he came wholly unable to express himself (to come through) as he had formerly done. This condition continued till he was fourteen years old, or, in other words, till he came to puberty! Then his former possibilities again appeared with wonderful suddenness, and they remained with him the rest of his long and useful life.

(Perhaps I ought to say, right here, to save the reader's "looking up," that Dr. Stillman became famous in more than one continent, and that, as a scholar, diplomat, and statesman, he ranked among the first. He represented the United States at Rome for many years; he was the friend and comrade of Ruskin, and was closely associated with Browning and Emerson, as well as with others of the leading minds of his day.)

But from seven to fourteen this individual was so nearly imbecile that his teachers used to address him as "stupid," and it took him three terms of school to master long division. These are things for all of us to remember, and there is no question as to the facts in the case. And, as said before, let it never be forgotten that a fact, once established, is something that must be accounted for, and that can never be gotten over.

It seems strange that Dr. Stillman should not have observed that his recovery of his lost abilities came at the time of his entering into manhood; and that he should not have at least suspected that there was a close relation between these two facts, that one was the cause of the other. But, be that as it may, it is quite evident that this is the true explanation of what happened. At puberty wonderful changes take place in the human body, as Stanley Hall has so ably shown in his studies of Adolescence, and these open up the way for new

possibilities of expression for the human mind, of new abilities to function in the mental plane. This is true, in large degree, in the case of nearly every individual. The results are rarely as remarkable as in this case, but the causes are the same in the whole human family.

My theory is that, in the case of Dr. Stillman, the severe sickness that he had when he was seven left him with some clog upon certain portions of his brain or nervous organism, the parts that had to do with his power to express himself before he was sick, but which he was unable to use when he got well again. Here he was stopped off, so to speak, for seven long years. Here he could not come through as he had once done. Perhaps there was a stoppage in the proper supply of blood for these parts of the brain, while other parts were not so affected. I do not know. I do not know that any one knows just exactly what happened; but I think it is clear that the trouble was all in the body of the boy, and not in his mind.

My reason for thinking so is that suddenly he was restored to a former condition, was able to express himself as aforetime, and that just when great bodily changes came to him. I have an idea that these bodily changes, which came at puberty, broke down the clogs that had interrupted the coming through of this lad on so many lines for so many years; and that, these barriers being removed, he could again express himself as he had formerly done — could function in certain mental planes as aforetime.

I ought to add that young Stillman was not "stopped off" in *all* his abilities to function in mental planes during these seven lean years. His knowledge of nature, *plants, flowers*, and animals, and his love for studying



them — were as great as ever, and constantly grew to more and more. But all these points on which he could still function were relegated to disuse by his parents and teachers in order that he might gain book knowledge, where he had become "short."

Nor do I believe that "keeping him everlastingly at" these studies was the cause of his mastering them. The dénouement was too sudden to make this theory account for such result. In such case, his progress would have been gradual. He did make some gradual progress in his studies during the years of his affliction. But the relief came *in an instant, and without effort on his part*. Such is not the way of plodding. It was not steady progress as a result of persistent effort that caused him to arrive, but a sudden illumination that came unlooked for and unsought.

Think on this for a minute, teacher or parent or other reader.

But was there anything the matter with this boy's mind, with his inmost self, during these seven strange years? Surely not. He was all right, all the time. The instrument he had to play on was out of repair in some places for a time, and so he could then make no music on these keys — some hammer was unglued or peg broken, for the time being. When these bad places were made good, then he could play again as he had once done.

And do not the facts that he had played once, and then could not play for a while, and then could play again after great bodily changes had come to him, — do not these things all prove that the trouble was entirely in the instrument and not at all in the player — that it was the body and not the mind of this individual that

was at fault? It seems to me that there can be small question as to the truth of such surmise; indeed, that the facts cannot be accounted for in any other way.

And if these things are so (and I firmly believe they are), what rows on rows of interrogation marks they set upon end, to question many of our acts as parents and teachers? And how are these question marks followed by rows on rows of marks of command, declaring that we must mend our ways in these regards! If the bodily conditions of our children and pupils are as fundamental and important as all these things indicate, what are we going to do about it?

And again I say, we must do the best we can. But first of all we must have regard to the facts in the case, and act accordingly, to the best of our ability, things being as they are.

(Just here I received a report of a most suggestive case in point from a teacher of "short" children in the public schools of New York City. She has among her pupils a boy of twelve who is now very limited in his possibilities. And yet this same boy had a most excellent school record up to the time he was ten years of age. But at that time of his life he had his skull fractured by falling from a fire escape in trying to get out of a burning apartment building. The injury was so severe that his life hung by a thread for weeks, but he finally lived. But he lives as only a part of his former mental self. He is now able to do almost nothing at all with books, and is almost entirely imbecile regarding subjects on which he was once able to express himself well. Can any one say that this boy's *mind* was dashed out on a curbstone? It was not his mind, but his body, that was broken. And the possibility of



his mind using his body was thereby limited. The hurt is probably of a sort that the changes that come at puberty will never rectify—that nothing can modify; but the case furnishes one more proof that “these things are in the body.” So I note it here.)

And so we must learn to esteem the bodies of our children and pupils as of far more importance than they were once considered to be, and give attention to them accordingly. As fast as we can attain to it, we must have these bodies examined by those who are competent to pass judgment upon them; and, as far as possible, thus learn what their condition is, in each and every case. Especially should this be done with children who show signs of variation from normal lines. I am no expert, but I once found, in a school I visited, a boy twelve years old who was blind in one eye; and yet neither his teachers nor his parents had ever discovered the fact! He was two grades below where he should have been, in the natural order of things, and his bad eye was the cause of it. Both his parents and his teachers considered him stupid, and there we are again. And this case of carelessness and neglect is not nearly as rare as it may seem to be.

But I need not take time to speak in detail of near-sightedness, partial deafness, semi-paralysis of one organ or another, and many other bodily defects which hamper pupils in their progress in school. Thank Heaven, some teachers are beginning to recognize them as factors in the work attempted in the schoolroom, and now and then they modify what they attempt to do for one pupil or another, accordingly. But far too largely, as yet, these things are as idle tales to many teachers, both of high and low degree. Yet the light is coming



through, all along the line. I shall say more about this later.

And now a word or two as to what can probably be done with these poor, or bad-bodied pupils—the “shorts,” in one way or another.

In the first place, I am convinced that, where the shortage is decidedly pronounced, there is not nearly the percentage of possibility for advancement, on the lines of the shortage, that has generally been supposed. This may seem a hard saying, but the truth must be told, and I believe this to be true. Colonel Parker once said to me, “Oh, Mr. Smith, your doctrine is so hopeless!” To which I replied, “That all depends.” But I will return to this later, also.

Where the shortage in the child is so pronounced that it amounts to idiocy, let it be said, once for all, that there is small chance for such a child ever advancing very far along its idiotic lines. It may progress, sometimes far beyond a normal child, in some other directions, but rarely along the lines of its shortage. Where the idiocy includes a large number of the faculties of the child, there is little use of even hoping that such a child can be brought to the standard of normality. I need not say that such cases are uncommon, but they exist; and where they do exist, they prove the truth of what I have said. There are human bodies that are in such bad shape, that were so from the beginning (they were born so), or that have been made so by accident (as in the case of the boy who fell from the ladder and broke his skull), or by disease of some sort, that the imprisoned minds that live in them can come through but very little—sometimes not at all. Yet these bodies *live, sometimes for years.*

But I do not call even these cases hopeless. These are the ones Walt Whitman has in mind, when he says :

"I saw the face of the most smeared and slobbering idiot in the asylum,

And I knew for my consolation what they did not know.

I know the agents that emptied and broke my brother,

And I know that the same Power waits, calm and patient, to clear away the rubbish ;

And one of these days I shall meet the real landlord,

Perfect and unharmed, and every whit as good as myself.

The Lord advances, and ever advances.

Always the shadow in front,

But ever the reached hand of the Almighty, moving up the laggards."

And that is not hopeless !

I believe there is a very wrong impression extant about what can be done for idiotic children in institutions which are provided for their care. Time and again I have heard stories about the wonderful things that have been done for children in these schools. But when I have brought these stories to the test, I have found that, whatever may have been the intentions of those who told them, they have conveyed a very wrong impression to the community at large. And here is the reason :—

These stories about the wonderful advancement of pupils in schools for idiots (they should never be called institutions for the feeble-minded ; such children are not feeble-minded, but only bad-bodied, and so idiotic or peculiar), are most of them true, in a way. But the progress made by those children that are told about is never, or at least rarely, if ever, along the lines of their natural idiocy.

Such children are "born short" to the extent of

idiocy, on some lines, while they are born normal, or often "long," sometimes to an extent little short of genius, on other lines. Their idiocies are so numerous and pronounced that they constitute the leading features of the children's make-up, and so they are sent to an institution. Here, their "long" sides are brought to the front, and they are sometimes permitted to move out on the lines on which they can come through. This work on their long sides is reported, and the conclusion reached by the outside world is, that such children have been brought to the standard of normality, *all along the line*. But this is so rarely the case that it is not worth taking into account.

Once in a while, as in the case of Dr. Stillman, a child that is idiotic on some lines, for the time being, because of something that happened to him after he was born, may come to normality on those lines; but where the child is born idiotic, there is very little probability that he will ever become normal to any great degree in the places where he is "born short." Those who have had experience with such children will unanimously sustain these statements.

This principle holds true in all cases where a child is really "born short," be the shortages many or few. Where the shortage is genuine and congenital, it is rarely ever overcome. Charles Sumner never attained to any mathematical ability worth mentioning; and General Grant was helpless, as a financier, to the day of his death. To be sure, he wrote his memoirs when he was dying by inches. But others had to "finance" them for him. The principle stands in his case and in all others. It seems hard, when looked at from some standpoints; but that is neither here nor there, so far



as the facts are concerned. The question here, as always, is what is the truth in the premises? I firmly believe it will always be found just as I have stated it.

And I am also sure that it is not nearly as bad as it seems, if it is only thoroughly understood, and the education of each child is provided for accordingly — that is, in harmony with the way he is, that he is brought to his best with what he has to do with, if his "one talent" is made the most of.

And so, for you, teachers or parents who have idiotic children in your schools or in your families, be not cast down overmuch, and do not torment either yourselves or the children in trying to bring them to normality all along the line. Rather be content to take them as they are, and do the most you can for them along the lines of their possibilities. Jesus said: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the glory of God might be made manifest"; and if you will help such children to move out on the line of their native abilities, to the limit of their powers, you will glorify God as greatly as the greatest! See it that way, which is the right way, I believe, and be comforted, ye who are weighed down with this sort of burden. And there are many such.

And if you send a child of yours to an "institution," don't expect too much to come of it. Many people go broken-hearted on this score. They have heard such wondrous tales about what has been done for children who they supposed were like theirs that their hopes mount high as they imagine what may be done for their own afflicted one. And then the months go by, and the change they hope for comes not; whereupon they sink down in despair! The cause of this unfortunate outcome is a failure to realize the truth of what I have

told in these last pages. True your hopes to the line of the possible in such cases, to what can be done for such children, they being as they are, and you will not then be disappointed; always remembering that there is small hope of making any child normally "long" where he is abnormally "short." Let the educational work for such children be done along the lines of their longages, and then helpful and satisfactory results, viewed from that standpoint, can be obtained.

It is further true that the more these children are successfully moved up along the lines of their possibilities, the more probability there is that they may move up, in some measure, along the lines of their so-far-indicated impossibilities. They gather strength, to a degree, all along the line, by the exercise of what faculties they can successfully use. This is a point never to be forgotten in the education of such children. But growth must come, if it comes at all, by starting the child along the lines in which he has at least some natural ability to move. If a start can be made there, there is hope for some progress elsewhere. Some of these children are the most lovable in the world, and they are all "provided for." Our duty is to do the best we can for them, they being what they are. They form a part of all the children of all the people, and as such they should be educated to the limit of their several possibilities.

## CHAPTER XI

### STRICTLY BETWEEN OURSELVES

Reasons for writing this Chapter—Doubts caused by the Phenomena of Extreme "Shortage"—Despair Resulting—A Foundation of Assurance Needful—"The Maker of All Things"—Everything is Looked After—Fatalism Denied—Workers with God—Life and Death the Constant Factors of all Change—Death has as much Purport as Life—Universality of Protecting Power—Definition of Hell—"All a Procession"—Monarchy and Democracy Contrasted—The Basic Law of Evolution—The Mission of the Seemingly Bad—Difficulty of making Uniform Regulations for All Mankind—Personal Conclusions—A Link binding the Parts of the Book together.

IN justice to all parties concerned, and especially to you who have so patiently lent me your eyes and given me your attention through the preceding pages, it seems to me that, before we go farther, it is only fair, in view of some of the things I have said in the last few chapters, I should open my heart to you a good way deeper down than I have yet done, and let you see the foundation I stand on, holding the theories and beliefs which I do regarding the various and sundry "shorts" in humanity that I have tried to set forth in what I have written thus far. For, the truth is that no one can honestly look these shortage facts in the face without having great questions rise in his mind as to the why of it all; and, beyond that, the outcome of it all. It is such considerations that sometimes force us to the verge of despair, that hurl us into a sea of doubt where we shall perish miserably if we have not a rock of immovable faith to cling to.



Of course I hesitate to say what I am going to say, for reasons that you can well understand. You have only to think how it would be if the case were your own, and then you will know all about it.

And in saying what I do I make no claim that I have found the absolutely immovable and fundamentally basic rock on which all can at once rest and be at peace. I may not have found such a place for any one else, not even for you. But of this you may be assured, I have found it for myself, and there is a chance that I may have found it for some one else—perhaps for you. Anyhow, I feel that the rock under my feet is broad enough, and solid enough, to sustain your weight as well as mine, and with us the weight of all humanity, for all time and eternity, if once the brethren and sisters can settle down on such a basis.

I cannot go into details as I should like to, but all at once and without apology I state that the rock I am based on is found in the words, "God made the heavens and the earth."

That sentence tells what I stand on; and, up to date, nothing has been able to move me therefrom. I accept that as the rock-bottom, St. Peter Sandstone foundation that sustains me now, and that I believe will sustain me continually.

For if God made the heavens and the earth, I reckon he has made all that has ever been made. (In another place the Book says, "And without him was not anything made that was made," and that is a good way to tell it.) And if God made all these, that takes in you, and me, and all the rest of everything everywhere. And that is enough!

*And all the evidence I can get at goes to show that*

the Power that has made all these things (which is only another name for what I and many others call God), takes care of them, and will forever keep doing so. And that brings you, and me, and all the rest of everything under shelter. And, being under shelter, you, and I, and all the rest of everything are safe. And if we are all safe, that is enough!

And so I rest secure; and so can you, and so can all, and everybody.

I grant that I see a good many things about me which, now and then, it seems to me, might be better looked after. But the older I grow the fewer such things I see, and the better I know that even these things are cared for, in a way that I once knew not of. I have had experiences in my own life, a good many of them, that, at the time, I thought were not looked after by the Power behind them as I thought they should have been. But the years have proved that even these were "provided for." It has been the same way with you, has it not?

And so, as I look out upon the great multitudes of my brothers and sisters, of all classes and conditions of men, women, and children, all the world over, and see the way they are, I cannot be troubled. For I believe that God made them *all*, and that what he has made he will care for, to the utmost limit. I find corroborative evidence of this, every way I look. The stars are cared for, and the stuff that the stars and all things else are made of is cared for, and all in between and about them all is cared for. And you, and I, and all the rest, are somewhere in between or about all these things.

And when I see some things that seem to me not cared for, I have come to understand that my reasons



for thinking so are because I do not see far enough, or deep enough, or wide enough. Then I become patient and "willing to wait."

And this does not mean fatalism. Anything but that. For, in my inmost soul, I feel that if I have been made, I also am a maker. The Book has it that "we are all workers together with God," and my experience teaches me that the Book is right about it. And this completes the circle—covers the whole ground. The Power that made all things works, and we work, and so things get on.

And the object of all work—God's, yours, mine, everybody's—is to make new and higher combinations out of things that are now combined in some other way than as we would henceforth have them.

When I found that out, it made a great change in the way I looked at things, past, present, and to come! It took the edge off my blame of people and things as they are, and led me to see that there was a reason why, in every case.

It made me understand that a great many conditions should be changed, and gave me zeal to try to help change them, as the Great Worker is helping to change things, all the time. But, meantime, it filled me with charity instead of hatred, and it taught me to wait patiently for outcomes.

This discovery also compelled me to see that all change must be from something that now is into something which is yet to be; and that it is life and death which make such change possible—which bring such change about! Neither of these can do the work alone. It always takes them both, death and life, whenever a change in anything is made. And neither of these



comes first in the order of their doing. They work in absolute unity. The only difference between them is that one is positive and the other negative. Life pushes, and death gives way ; but the push and the yielding are a part of one and the same single performance — of the change from what is into what is to be.

When I found that out, then I saw that "death has just as much purport as life has," and so I ceased to be any more afraid of death than of life. I also learned that it is not wise to pass blame upon present conditions, no matter what they may be, or to waste time mourning over them ; but that it is my business, as a positive factor in the problem, always to be "up and doing," always busy making changes — bringing death to the unworthy and life to that which is better.

And then I saw what is true for me must be true for everybody else, absolutely.

For, who am I, or who are you, that we and ours should be well looked after and the rest be left uncared for? I used to think that happiness would come if I and mine were specially cared for. But I was mistaken ! I think you will come to the same conclusion if you will think these things over for a while. Some one has said that hell is the pursuit of happiness for its own sake, and for one's own selfish interest. And if only we and ours are cared for, that is selfishness supreme — that is hell at its utmost.

No, it must be all or nothing ! Some is not enough ! And it cannot be nothing ! Because, we know that we are cared for. And because we know that we are each only one in the great procession, therefore the whole procession is cared for.

And will you think for a minute what that means?

Will you try to think of something that is not cared for? The great is cared for, and the small is cared for, and all in between is cared for. I have said that in another way, a few lines back, but it is so important that it will bear saying many ways, and many times. All is cared for, all is "provided for."

And so I look upon these "shorts," here and there — the shortages in myself and in all the rest I have ever seen, anywhere, and I realize that we are all only becoming. We are changing from what we now are to something other than we now are. That "all is in a procession," and that all is going forward. Some are far up the line, some lag away in the rear, and there are crowds all in between. But all came from the same Source, and all move in the same direction — forward!

And the Maker of the procession helps us to move forward, and we help ourselves to move forward, and it is also our business to help those who are about us to move forward, and so we all get on.

Here and there I see what sometimes seems to me a turning back, but I find that, if I can only keep such appearances under my eye long enough, I shall find that this also ultimately makes for progress. You can think of a thousand such experiences in your own line of growth, and in the line of growth of others that you know about.

And then it came to me that it doesn't make so very much difference just where we are in the procession, at a given time; for we shall all arrive far up the line, in due season, and then still keep on, going up. The only essential thing is that we keep going. And we shall do that. The pace may vary, but we shall all always *advance!*



And then I thought that whoever is in advance has no cause to despise those who are behind, or to look down upon them, or to boast over his own position in the line. He may be glad that he has attained, but the sole result of his joy will be to increase his effort to help another to come to where he is. It will cause him to count himself the servant of all in his rear, and not their boss. It will make him their brother and not their king. He will become genuinely democratic, and will be imbued with the true spirit of mutualness.

For the compelling force of monarchy is always selfishness, while the animating spirit of genuine democracy is always self-sacrifice. The Power that has made all things, and which sustains all things, and which cares for all things, and which provides for all things—this Power is an Internal Animating Spirit and not an External Compelling Force. It has mutualness and not monarchy for its essential principle.

And then I learned to know that the fundamental law for each individual is that he must be permitted to go his own way, so long as such going does not interfere with any one else; and this is only another version of the Golden Rule, as a moment's reflection will show.

All of which means that I have a right to go my own way, and you have an equal right to go your own way, so long as we harm no one else by the way we go; and that I have no right to compel you to go my particular way, neither have you a right to compel me to go your particular way; neither does it become either of us to imperiously declare that our way is the only way, and that he is anathema who says otherwise.

I need not say that this is really the basic law of evolution, which proceeds always from the simple to the



complex, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous and the infinitely diversified.

And so I see a place in the procession for all the "longs" and a place for all the "shorts," and I know that the present conditions of both are but temporary; that the "longs" have an endless road over which they can go, and that the "shorts" have an endless road over which they can come; and that neither need say to the other, "What doest thou?" but that, in the true spirit of mutualness we will all tramp on together, and keep doing so.

Then I also saw that each in his own place is sufficient, and that there is small need of making comparisons, one to the detriment of another; but that the main item in the count of each is to fill his own place full to the utmost, his ability being what it is.

I also saw that each has a place and a way of his own, and that all the experiences of life that come to any individual are for his best good; and that, sometime, each will come to see it that way. That what at first seems good may prove good altogether, and that what at first seems to be bad, this also will prove to be for good, in the long run. So I quit quarreling with the seemingly bad, and instead, set myself to work to find out

"What He would have this evil do for me?  
 What is its mission? what its ministry?  
 What golden fruit lies hidden in this husk?  
 How shall it nurse my virtue, nerve my will,  
 Chasten my passions, purify my love,  
 And make me in some goodly sense like Him  
 Who bore the cross of evil while He lived  
 And hung and bled upon it when He died?"

And things looked differently to me after this revelation came.

Then it was revealed to me why it is so hard to make rules and regulations (laws, and courses of study) that shall work equally well in all parts of the procession. The line is so long, and there are so many kinds in it! And so the Power behind all has, as a matter of fact, made rules and regulations for each individual in especial, to the effect that each man, woman, or child shall go his or her own gait, so long as such going does not interfere with the going of any one else! That is basic, and the true progress of each individual can come only from its observance. The spirit of genuine democracy, of true mutualness, always has regard for such law. The right arm of monarchy cares for it not a pin's fee!

The spirit that animates modern progress is grounded in democracy, in mutualness. The exploiting of this idea has been too much along monarchical lines in nearly all the ways of life. A change is bound to take place in what has been attained. Death will get in its work, and life will get in its work. The unfit and mistaken will pass away, and the fit and right will take their places.

It was not till I got this view of things that I found anything like rest and peace. But now I can rest and be at peace. Not that I will sit down and do nothing, saying that it will all come out right, anyhow. Not that at all. But, knowing that I have a place in the procession, and that it is my business to keep moving; and seeing, too, that if I lag, I shall pay for my indifference, and get prodded on; and having come to understand that what is true of myself is true to anybody else, in that we are all in the procession, and so are all honorable and to be wondered at—having learned this, I march with my brothers and sisters, proud of them all, watching with equal joy the strong



walking of those who are before me and the feeble and limping steps of those who may be far behind, as we all travel onward, forever and forever.

Be comforted, then, my brother, my sister, whoever you are. Cease fretting about yourself in the procession, or the place occupied by those who are near and dear to you. If you are "long" in certain ways, be thankful and not proud. If you or yours are "short" (and no matter how "short") in certain ways, be not ashamed or cast down, but make the best you can out of what you have; realizing that "that which fills its own period or place is the equal of any," and that it is a thousand times better to do a simple thing well than it is to try to do something that is too much for you, and fail in the undertaking. Keep moving, keep working with God, and so you will keep on arriving continually.

The fact is that the only real joy of life comes from working with God, and in helping to keep things moving. Some one has said that heaven is a constant endeavor on one's part to help to the attainment of its possible best every life form that one comes in contact with. I believe this is absolutely true. And I believe that, in your inmost soul, dear reader, my experience in this regard is yours.

All of which is strictly between ourselves. I have said it hesitatingly, and because I could not help saying it. My hope is that it may serve as a sort of confidential link between us, as we pass from what I have so far said into the more positive part of what I had in mind to say when I began writing this book. If this heart to heart talk between us can put us *en rapport* for what all I have so far said leads up to, then it will have filled its mission, and we shall be in good shape to enter upon *the consideration* of the following chapters.



## CHAPTER XII

### SOME WHYS AND WHEREFORES

A Foundation Constructed — Brief Review of Points Made — The Purpose of Education — Relation of the Phenomena of "Short" and "Long" to Public School Issues — Newness of the Attempt to educate Everybody — Author's Recollection of its Early History — Great Results not to be too soon looked for — Review of History of Public Schools essential to Full Comprehension of their Present and Future Needs and Possibilities — Outline of Further Investigations and Studies Proposed — Some Suggestions to follow.

Now, as a matter of fact, all I have said, so far, is merely preliminary, a sort of preface to what I have yet to say. I admit that this preface is long, for in volume it makes nearly one third of the book I am submitting to the reader; but I could not make it shorter in view of the importance which the base it forms bears to what I propose to build upon it.

There is many a lighthouse whose foundation is the chief part of the structure that shows where danger lies and points the way of deliverance therefrom.

I believe that I have demonstrated that there are such phenomena as are defined by the words "born short" and "born long," *in all materialized humanity*, and that such primal characteristics have a marked tendency to persist in each individual life that they are manifest in; and, further, that such conditions are positive factors that ought to be taken into account in any righteous effort to bring each individual to his or her possible best.

And now, since it is the avowed aim and purpose of all education to bring humanity, individually and collectively, to its possible best; and since, in carrying out such purpose it is essential that all the factors that have to do with the problem should be taken into account, it is strictly logical and practical to consider the relation that exists between the phenomena I have put in the foreground and an attempt to educate all the children of all the people.

These statements square us around and set our faces forward along the road that we shall travel for the rest of the journey.

Anent which, I beg first to call the attention of the reader to the newness or comparative recency of any attempt to educate all the children of all the people. I am only a trifle past my threescore years, and yet my memory reaches back to the time when there was no such possibility generally thought of in this country, much less attempted. I can well remember hearing the feasibility of such an undertaking discussed at a "teachers' meeting," in western Massachusetts, when I was a boy of ten. Horace Mann was the speaker of the occasion, and though I was but a child when I heard him, he spoke so forcibly that he not only kept me awake all through his talk, but I remember much of what he said, and I shall use a part of it before I am done with this writing.

About a half century, then, is the measure of all the time we have really been working at the problem of universalizing education, and that is practically but a few minutes in the stretch of years which it takes to fully universalize anything. So we must be as patient here as we are when dealing with any other evolutionary

process. These all work slowly and take their own time for effecting results.

Before any attempt is made to suggest what ought to be done in any given situation, it is not only fair, but absolutely essential to justice, that there should be a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of what the situation really is, and of how it came to be so. And so, before proceeding with any suggestions that this treatise may have to make regarding our efforts to educate all the children of all the people, it is necessary that we review, quite thoroughly, the history of our attempts in that direction to date; how such attempts came to be made; what the conditions, intellectual, social, and economic, were at the time the undertaking began; what ideas prevailed at the outset of the attempt regarding what constituted an education; what means and methods were reckoned as competent to produce the ends aimed at; how these means and methods were applied, and why just these means and methods were used just as they were, — with some survey of the results all these things have produced.

And so I shall honestly try to find out somewhere near where we are in our thus-far attempts to educate all the children of all the people, and how we have come to be in our present status, before I make any suggestions as to what the future may have in store for us by way of marvel or surprise on these counts.

And having done so much, I hope to be able to point out some of the things it would seem wise to do, all these conditions being as they are. All of which will make up the sum and substance of what the following pages will contain.



## CHAPTER XIII

### BITS OF HISTORY

The Spirit of Democracy the Origin of the Attempt to universalize Education — Pioneers in the Cause — Caution to be used in criticizing These — Horace Mann — His Purposes and Theories — Their Effect upon the System of Schools he Inaugurated — "Academies" and High Schools — How Public High Schools became "College Feeders."

BEYOND all question the attempt to educate all the children of all the people was grounded in a genuine spirit of democracy. Or, perhaps mutualness would be a better word to express just what the animating idea was that took form in the effort to universalize education, — though I do not find that word in the dictionary. In any event, the movement was only one of many manifestations of an attempt to make general things which, so far in the history of the world, had been special; to have all share in what, up to that time, only a few had been permitted to have. It was an honest effort to convey to the masses what had heretofore been the prerogative of classes only.

The men who fathered this idea and who were the immediate factors in its objective embodiment were among the most noble souls the world has ever produced.

Their ideals were God-born, and their efforts to realize them are among the highest that human endeavor has ever put forth. Let these facts never be forgotten, for they are worthy of immortal acknowledgment.

On the other hand, experience in all lines of life

proves that the pioneers in any given enterprise seldom, if ever, succeed in putting into operation the best possible methods of reaching their ideals. So many instances which go to prove the truth of this statement will readily occur to the reader that none need be quoted here.

Again, it is not finding fault with pioneers, much less condemning them, if those who come after them question the wisdom of some of the primary methods used in their first experimentations. We live in a world of progress and not of finalities; and this is specially true with regard to all means and methods that are used by mankind to obtain results. These principles are as true in matters educational as they are elsewhere.

I make these remarks just here because, as a matter of fact, conservatism is a little more pronounced in the educational world than in any other sphere of life that I know about, unless it be in the realm of theology. "'Tis true, 'tis pity; pity 'tis 'tis true." And there are not wanting many good men and true women who feel that if any move is made to change anything that ever has been, educationally, such effort is a slur upon the past, and an attempt at defamation of the characters of the originators of the things whose change is afterwards sought. All of which is wrong.

I reverence the fathers of the attempt to educate all the children of all the people as much as any one can. So far as the real, essential results they *desired* to accomplish are concerned, there is nothing left to be wished for. Their purpose was to bring every individual to his or her possible best. If there was a fault anywhere, it lay in their conception of what was the possible best for each individual, and of what was the best way to attain such result.

Now, look for a moment, first at the conception of what constituted an education, or an educated man, as it obtained in the days when the idea of popular education first came into vogue and the first efforts were made to materialize that idea.

Horace Mann may well be counted as among one of the best of the fathers of the original scheme, and he had more to do with its early exploitation than any other one individual in this country. And so, in considering what he was, what educational ideas he held, and how he tried to establish ways and means that would carry out what he believed to be for the best in the issues at stake, we are studying the whole group of his coadjutors; and from his single case we may practically learn the truth regarding all his colaborers.

Let no one say that I am attacking Horace Mann in what I am about to say. I only use his name and cite his work because they are especially in point, and are fair specimens of all the beliefs and doings of all the fathers of the efforts to achieve popular education.

Horace Mann was a classically educated scholar, and the ideas of what constituted an educated man in the age in which he lived were all of the classical sort, as that word was interpreted, educationally, at that time. To say, then, that a man was an educated man was virtually to say that he was a classical college graduate. I do not complain of this, but I beg to call special attention to it as an undeniable fact, for it is the very corner stone of what all this is leading up to.

Such, then, were the ideas of what constituted an education, and of who were educated men.

Now there is no denying the fact (nor is it strange that the fact should be as it was) that, with these ideas



as to what constituted an education and as to who were educated men, the attempt to universalize education was exploited with these ideas as a basis. That is, *the attempt, as originally made, was to classically educate all the children of all the people.* Right there is the very beginning, the primal germ of what afterwards grew to be the material form of our public school system — of what these schools stood for, and of the particular nature of the output they strove to produce. It goes without saying that, for the most part, this original conception on these fundamental points, remains, to this day, practically where it started.

I well remember hearing Mr. Mann say, in the address I have referred to: "We will make a system of schools which will render it possible for every child, rich or poor, to go to college." (The reader will recall the fact that I have already stated that I was "born long" on remembering and quoting. I would stake all I am worth on the accuracy of the above quotation, though it is more than half a century since I heard it.)

In that same address, the speaker went on to explain how they would change all the "Academies," which were then very numerous all through Massachusetts and in some others of the Eastern and Middle States, into "High Schools," which all the children should be permitted to attend, *free*. He then told how all the public schools would have their work fashioned relative to the work which would later be done in these High Schools, so that the whole education of all the children, from entrance day to graduation, should be fashioned with a classical college education as the ultimate goal to be reached by all the children of all the people.

Then he dwelt upon the result of all this, as he saw

it, namely, that all these children, all uniformly educated as he had been educated, would be thoroughly capable of informing themselves well on all questions and issues of public importance; how judicially minded they would all be, because of the training they had all received in the higher realms of culture which all would have had the benefits of, and so forth, and so following. It was a glorious picture, and I well remember how my father, who was an Amherst man, glowed with enthusiasm about it as he talked all these things over with Mr. Mann, who took supper at our house with the minister and a few teacher friends after the lecture.

I ought to add, too, that it was because of all these great and good civic results, which the speaker said would follow this universal dissemination of classical learning, that he claimed it was right and just to tax all the people for the support of the schools which were to put our entire population into such prime condition for good citizenship. This point, I remember, he urged strongly, owing to the fact that it was a rural New England audience he was addressing, and some of his hearers were quite wealthy men, without children, and these rather objected to being taxed to pay for the education of other people's offspring. The whole address made a lasting impression upon me, as these excerpts duly prove.

Now it is a matter of common knowledge to all who are even fairly well posted upon the subject, that the lines Mr. Mann laid down, more than fifty years ago in that New England village, have practically been followed in the rise and progress of our public school system, throughout this entire nation. These schools were all *exploited* upon a classical college idea of what consti-

tutes an education, and the possible entrance to a classical college was made the end and aim of all the work that was done in them, from turret to foundation stone, or *vice versa*. As such the work of our public schools was fashioned, and as such it has been pursued, for the most part, even unto this day.

And so it was that our public schools, all of them, from primary to high school, were exploited with the idea that their chief function was that of being classical "college feeders." This was the first step in the particular way in which the attempt to educate all the children of all the people was made. That it was honestly made there can be no doubt. That those who exploited the idea in this particular fashion fully believed that the method used would yield the fruits prophesied is equally certain. The whole story is only a bit of history that everybody should know is true.



## CHAPTER XIV

### MORE BITS OF HISTORY

First Factors combined to solve the Universal Education Problem  
— Declaration of Independence — Locke's *Tabula Rasa* Theory  
— What Man has done Man can do — The Military Spirit and  
Methods — Formulated Courses of Study — Times and Seasons  
for Given Parts of the Same — Penalties for Failures to Tally —  
Classroom Methods used — Memory Culture and Memory Tests  
— Commencement — Accredited Schools.

THERE were certain other factors in the early efforts to educate all the children of all the people that must be noted just here. Among these were the generally accepted psychological theories of the period regarding the mental possibilities of humanity; and these were backed up and buttressed by the basic sociological pronouncement of the Declaration of Independence, which, as popularly translated, aided and abetted these theories perfectly. All these elements were unified and woven together into a compact whole, and in this shape they were utilized as a philosophic basis for the cause of popular education to rest upon.

And here is how the popular argument ran: The Declaration of Independence asserted that all men were created equal. The word "equal" meant alike — the dictionary said so, and a dictionary is the court from which there is no appeal when it comes to telling what words mean!

Then follows Locke's *tabula rasa* theory, to the effect that the mind of a child is like a white piece of paper

on which can be marked whatever we wish. These two formulas were then logically joined, as follows: Since all children are born alike, and their minds are all like blank sheets of paper on which we can mark whatever we will, it follows that all we have to do is to mark the same things on all children's minds, in exactly the same way, and a uniform result must be inevitable.

Then followed another dogma which was in harmony with the foregoing philosophy, and which was formulated in this way: "What man has done man can do." This was translated to mean that what any man ever had done, any other man (and, therefore, every other man) could do if he tried hard enough and worked at it long enough.

(My father was anxious that I should be a good Latin and Greek scholar, and when I was sweating blood to get my lessons and keep up with my classes in these studies, as I have related, in response to my tearful appeals for surcease from such sorrow, he used to say to me: "Persevere, Willie! Edward Everett mastered a score of languages, and if he did, you can. Your mind is just as strong as his, if you will only exercise it as he did. Don't ever forget that what man has done man can do!" And my father is not the only man who has quoted this phrase under similar circumstances!)

There is another factor that had to do with the exploiting of this first attempt to generally disseminate classical college education among the masses, which has not been generally recognized, but which was none the less potent. This is the prevalence, among all our people, of the military spirit, at just the formative period of our public graded school system on the basis outlined by its founders.

This formative period came just at the close of our Civil War. For four years our whole population had been soaked in militarism till its spirit had permeated our entire body politic. This is one of the effects of war which is doubtless slow in manifesting itself, but which is the most abiding of all the evils that lurk in its trail.

The essence of the military spirit is compulsion. "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die" tells the whole story.

And now see what follows, as does the night the day, putting all these facts and conditions together :

The founders of our public graded school system had a theory for its propagation which was absolutely faultless, from a logical standpoint. They were so convinced of its efficiency, when once it should be established, that they did not hesitate to guarantee the results that would surely follow. These results were such as the whole spirit of democracy had long looked forward to eagerly ; our people were behind the purpose to a man, and what remained but to put it into operation ? And, in the spirit of that age, if it was a good thing (and everybody believed it was), why not establish it by *compulsion* ? So the attempt was made to *work* the plan by military methods and in that way to compel its uniform acceptance by all the children of all the people.

In accordance with such military methods and usages, therefore, a plan of campaign was designed and put into operation which was systematic in the utmost degree. The work to be done by each and every pupil was outlined with perfect minuteness and accuracy, from entering day to graduation. This work was divided into *regular* portions and sections, and a certain amount was



to be acquired by the pupil in certain times, this allotment sometimes descending to the details of days and hours of the day. The plan was to enter a class of a certain age in a primary grade, have them all take a prescribed amount of work in a definitely fixed time, and all come out, at the end of each and every term, possessed of exactly the same attainments.

To compel such results, in regular military fashion, penalties were fixed for all pupils who failed to reach the required standards in the times named. Several studies were included in each period of time, and if a pupil failed to "pass" in any *one* of these studies, as a penalty he was compelled to go over the work again, not only in the study in which he had failed, but in *all the others* which were included in that particular period! He must stay in each "grade" till *all* the work of that grade was well and thoroughly done, before he could be permitted to proceed with *any* other work, further on in the uniform prescribed "Course of Study." In this way pupils were not infrequently kept for several terms in the same room, going over the same work again and again, until the required uniformity in all the required studies was reached. It was held that by this method only could symmetry in scholarship and character be attained. If pupils failed beyond a certain fixed limit, they were dropped out of school or expelled.

And the chief aim of all this work was to fit pupils to enter classical colleges. These institutions practically formulated the courses of study which all the children were compelled to take if they continued in the public schools at all. In a word, the whole system was faced classical-collegeward, and it was manipulated almost entirely in the interest of these institutions which really

dominated all the public schools of all the people in this country.

Again, the technical classroom methods that were used for giving pupils an education at the time the public schools came into being were almost entirely of the sort used in the days when whatever was learned had to be "committed to memory." From what dim past this practice came can only be surmised; but it probably began as far back as the time when there were no books, when the memory was the only storehouse for the preservation of the record of past events and of knowledge previously obtained. In any event, in the early days of public school exploitation the *memory* was counted as the *chief factor* to be utilized and cultivated in *all* educational processes; and the selection of studies to be pursued and all the methods used in classrooms were aimed in the direction of cultivating the memory.

As a result of this, the ability to reproduce, by the sole aid of memory, whatever had been once learned came to be the test of scholarship, and the pupil who could best relate or write out what his teacher had asked him to "commit to memory" was counted the best scholar.

To all this were added, most naturally, frequent written examination tests, in which each pupil's work was proved up by his ability to reproduce, at the arm's length of memory alone, any or all the things which had once been given into the charge of this omniscipacious receptacle.

And this was only in harmony with the then accepted psychological theories regarding the memory. The memory was then regarded as a storehouse which would safely keep anything and everything that was well *packed into it*, and it was universally held by the peda-



gological theorists of that time that from such storehouse its keeper could reproduce any or all of the things committed to it, instantly, on call. It was further held that the capacity of this storehouse could be increased indefinitely, *in all directions*, by proper exercise and training, and the chief end and aim of all educational methods was to augment its holding area and the amount of stuff it contained. All of which it was claimed would develop the individual to his possible best in every way, — make him a good citizen, soldier, father, or what not.

More than this, since it was the aim of all the work done in all the schools through all the grades as these things were first formulated to finally fit all their products for future classical college work; and since it was necessary, before pupils could enter such classical colleges, that their attainments at the time of entrance be verified; and since memory tests of what had been done were the sole proofs relied on as evidence of proficiency in the attainments required, — since all these things were so, the ability to stand a classical college entrance examination was made the unswerving requirement for graduation from a public high school.

And all of this was only in harmony with the original plan, which was to make the public "high schools" take the place of the old "Academies" (whose sole business it was to fit pupils for classical college entrance by a written memory-examination test of fitness), and to make all the grade schools below the high schools tributary to this ultimate end; which same it was at first supposed all the children of all the people could attain to, according to the logic which was based on the mental theories of that time. Thus the whole scheme went together as nicely as the House that Jack Built. There



is not a break in the logic of the entire process, the fundamental premises being admitted.

Once more (for we must trace this thread of events to the very end it finally attained), the burden of memory-test written examinations for classical college entrance finally became too hard to bear, and so Mother Necessity went to work to find a way of escape from its hardships; and she found it, in the shape of "Accredited Schools."

Dare I pause, just here, to trace the way this came about? Bear with me a minute, I will be brief.

Did you ever stop to think why it is that the last day of a year's school work is called "Commencement"? There's a reason! As things used to be in classical colleges, where the name and custom originated, this was the day for the examination of new pupils for the coming term, the entrance day for the "freshman class" for the next year. To attract as many new students as possible (for students had to be drummed up when there were only the tuition academies to furnish them) the college graduating class of the just-ending year was brought out and exploited and paraded to a degree, so that the on-coming youngsters might see what they themselves might some day become. And on this day all the *new* students were examined for college entrance! It was a day of joy for the out-goers, of dread for the in-comers.

And very shrewd all this was — this examination of freshmen from the academies just at this time; because college commencement time came just at the time the academies closed their season's work! These academy pupils were all fresh from the studies they had been at work memorizing through the previous fall, winter, and *spring*; and the time to examine them and not have them

"flunk" was before they "got rusty"! Many of our fathers were very wise men!

And then, after a while, the colleges became anxious to draw pupils from greater distances. It costs money to travel far, and many pupils were too poor to make a special trip over a long way just to "enter college," and then go back home again and wait three months when they must make another long journey to take up their college work. All of which resulted in the colleges delegating to certain *schools* the right to examine pupils for entrance to their institutions and of certifying the same, these colleges agreeing to take such certificates in lieu of their own entrance examinations. This way of doing worked for a while, till, finally, the colleges agreed to take the diplomas of certain high schools as evidence of the fitness of the pupils who held them to enter upon collegiate work.

High schools whose diplomas will be so accepted by colleges are now called "Accredited Schools," and for several years it has been the highest ambition of practically all the high schools in this country to become accredited schools with as large a number of colleges as possible. For so are their graduates relieved from the terrors of a written memory-test examination of fitness to enter college. And the high school which can present the largest list of colleges which will accept its diplomas in lieu of entrance examination is counted the best high school, the country over. And that is that story.

Then came the increased demands of the colleges for larger and more comprehensive "entrance requirements." These have been augmented, from time to time, till both high school teachers and pupils have been extra-heavily loaded by burdens they have been asked

to bear for this cause. Sometimes these demands have been exceedingly dictatorial and exacting. It is only a few days since the principal of one of the best high schools in our state showed me a letter from a college which read, "If we continue longer to accept your diplomas as certificates for admission to our institution, you must add so and so to your course." And the principal said he should have to stand for it; that his patrons would never permit him to lower the standard of their high school; that they were too proud to admit that there could be any better high school than theirs; that their sons and daughters must have a right to the best, no matter how hard it had to be worked for, or what conditions were made for its attainment!

With which statement of facts that are almost universal in this country to-day, I close the second bit of history.



## CHAPTER XV

### SOME RESULTS

Original Methods still used in Most Public Schools — Some Exceptions noted — Graduation Day Experiences — Small Graduating Classes — Reasons for this — Over-age Pupils in Lower Grades — Attendance in First and Second Year High School Classes compared — Latin and Algebra as "Knockouts" for Crowds of Children — Statistics in point — "Laggards in our Schools" — Leonard P. Ayres' Conclusions — Report of United States Bureau of Education — Illinois Reports — Galesburg, Illinois, Report — Some Deductions — Some Conclusions.

SUCH, then, is a brief review of what and how the attempt has been made in this country to educate all the children of all the people. For about half a century the enterprise has been exploited almost wholly on the original lines, and for the most part the work is still carried on as it was primarily undertaken. Here and there, in a few large cities and in an occasional town or rural school, efforts have been made to improve somewhat on the original plan; but the vast majority of our public schools, as they are conducted at this moment, are still moving on the lines of their primal projection. This is specially true of the schools in towns and cities of moderate size, those of say 5000 inhabitants or below. In almost every one of these the ambition still is to have their high school "accredited"; Latin, always, and sometimes Greek, ancient history, algebra, geometry, classical literature, and a few terms in the sciences, which are chiefly taught by memoriter methods

—these, in the great majority of cases, constitute the uniform and inflexible course of study of these schools, and all graduates are required to qualify in these studies if they receive diplomas. In these schools the rule is, “take these studies if you stay in school at all.”

In saying this, I speak from a large experience which I have gathered from visiting schools of this class in a great majority of states in the Union. For the past fifteen years I have had occasion to travel through these states, and to visit cities and towns of the classes referred to, and wherever I have gone I have made it a point to visit the schools and carefully observe the work done in them. Add to this the fact that for the past ten years I have made from a dozen to twenty “graduating addresses” every season, and that these have been given in all parts of the country east of the Rocky Mountains, a fact that has put me in close touch with the actual output of these schools, and the reader will see that I have had a good opportunity to know what I am talking about.

Further, everywhere that I have made a graduating address, I have made it a point to inquire about the diplomas that were granted, what requirements they called for, and what purpose they would serve. And it has been a rare thing for me to find an exception to the “regular rule” I have noted in this chapter. In nearly every case, the high school was “accredited”; the diploma would admit to one or more colleges, all diplomas were uniform, and no pupils were permitted to graduate who had not met their requirements.

Occasionally I have found a school where this rigorous method did not obtain, but such have been rare. I *recall one school*, where diplomas of two or more kinds

were awarded, one sort to the regular classical students, and another to those who had taken a "mixed course." In this school the students who received classical diplomas were dressed in cap and gown, and sat on the platform during the graduation exercises. The other graduates were clad in their best clothes only, and sat at the side of the platform, apparently as a sign that they were not worthy of the high calling to which their classical mates had attained. I merely mention this case in passing. Let the reader think of what it stands for, and form his own conclusions.

As I review these various "commencements" which I have attended, and think of the size of the classes that have been graduated on these occasions, and compared these with the entering classes of which these graduates were a part, I have been struck, time and again, with a fact that is exceedingly significant when viewed from the standpoint of an attempt to educate all the children of all the people. This is what these schools have been honestly trying to do, and it is not unfair to look upon these graduating classes as a just measure of how well they have succeeded in this endeavor. The original plan, as outlined by Horace Mann, was to have *all* who entered these schools graduate therefrom. Because it was supposed this could be done, it was claimed that it was right to tax all the people, that all their children might compass this greatly-to-be-desired accomplishment. I doubt if the classes I have seen graduate would average ten per cent of the enrollment of their entering classes in the primary rooms. And the question is, Where are the other ninety per cent? Why are they not in their places on graduation day? What is the cause of this great falling off in the membership of the



classes as the years of school life have passed by? These are fair questions, and pertinent as well.

Of course, some of each original class are dead. Some have moved away; but the towns in which the members of these classes lived have been growing towns, and where some have moved away, others have come to take their places, enough to make the loss from this cause good, if that were the real reason for the decline in class numbers.

But there is no need of beating about the bush, when the real reason for this decline is well known by all who are acquainted with the facts in the case. The simple truth is that the vast majority of the pupils who have dropped out of school as the years of school life came and went, have done so because they could not, or at least *did* not, do the work which it was required they should do if they stayed in school at all. At every grade examination there have been numbers of failures to "pass," with consequent stay-where-you-are-and-do-it-*all-over-again*, or "demotion," results. Some of these pupils who have failed to pass stay where they are for a term or two, or a year or two, but the vast majority of them drop out, and "that's the reason," the *real* reason, for the thinning ranks of classes as they go up the grades. Everybody knows that it is a basic truth I am telling.

A high school principal in one of the best schools of this class in his state told me that for ten years an average of only about forty per cent of each entering class had continued till graduation day. Sixty per cent of the entering grammar school graduates were down and out of school before they should have been. I asked him if there was anything like a uniformity of *cause* for this falling off at the end of the first year,

and he told me that most of such pupils "failed in Latin or algebra, or both!" And that is something to think about. For I am persuaded that this principal's experience is above the average, in the number of pupils he retains, for he is a most excellent teacher, one of the best. The fault is deeper seated than the personality of the teacher, however, and we all know what it is.

And of those who stay and go over the work again and again in the grades, we all know that little good comes from such procedure. Such pupils wear the life out of their teachers and themselves, and all to small avail. One can "spot" these pupils as soon as one enters any grade schoolroom in the country. They are several sizes too large for the seats they occupy, and are heads taller and pounds heavier than the children they have to recite with. The schools contain many such, "from Maine to California and from the Lakes to the Gulf." Superintendent Maxwell of New York made a report, not long ago, to the effect that a large percentage of the pupils in the schools of that city are from one to three grades below where they should be if they had kept pace with the classes in which they started, and since his report was made numberless similar reports, from all over this country, reveal the fact that his experience is not unique.

(I have a school superintendent friend who is a good deal of a wag, and he said to me one day, "The only sensible way to grade a school is according to size!" He was not wholly right, but there is much pertinency in his remark. Anyhow, this thing is true, that when there are such overgrown and over-age children, in any considerable number, in our schoolrooms it is certain that something is wrong somewhere.)



Just what the actual conditions are, in detail, on this point, take the country over, it is difficult to determine with absolute accuracy. Reliable statistics are very difficult to obtain, though it would seem as though they ought to be easily procured. Extended and ably conducted efforts have many times been made to secure definite data in these premises, but the results are far from satisfactory. Foremost among such investigations is that conducted by the Russell Sage Foundation, the results of which have been ably compiled by Leonard P. Ayres, A.M., under the title of "Laggards in Our Schools," a book that every teacher ought to be familiar with. It would be interesting to quote at length from this and other similar reports, but space will not permit. Enough to say that Mr. Ayres concludes that only about twelve per cent of all our children who enter the public schools remain in them till they are sixteen years old, and even this remnant is still further depleted in the two remaining years of public school life.

Some fair idea of the situation can doubtless be gathered by noting certain facts set down in some of the educational reports referred to. Thus, in the Report of the United States Bureau of Education on Secondary Schools for the year 1910, Chapter XXV, it is stated that the total enrollment in all the public high schools of this country for the year 1909-1910 was 915,061. The total number of graduates for the same year was 111,363; and the total number of graduates who were prepared to enter college for that year is given as 37,811.

I have been unable to find the total enrollment in *all* the public schools in the United States for the year 1909-1910, but for the year 1908-1909, it was 17,506,175; and according to the ratio of increase in



previous years it is safe to say that approximately 18,000,000 children were enrolled in all the public schools in this country in 1909-1910. Assuming this to be fairly correct, it appears that of the 18,000,000 of children attending school on any given day of that year, 915,061, or about 50 in 1000, were in the high school; and of these, 111,363, or about 6 in 1000, of the entire enrollment graduated; while 37,811, or about 2 in 1000, of the entire enrollment held diplomas which would entitle them to enter college.

In the state of Illinois, conditions are considerably better on these points than in the country at large, as, indeed, they ought to be. In the report of the Educational Department of that state for the year just noted, 1909-1910, the entire enrollment in all the public schools of the state is given as 1,002,687, of which 63,392 were in the high schools, while 8137 graduated. Using the same method of comparison employed in considering all the schools in this country, as noted in the previous paragraph, these figures mean that, in Illinois, of all the pupils attending school on a given day, 63 in 1000 are in the high schools and 8 in 1000 graduate.

In the city of Galesburg, Illinois, whose schools I shall refer to later, the entire enrollment for the year 1909-1910 was 3814, of which 767 were in the high school, and 115 graduated. These figures mean that, on any given day, 200 pupils to each 1000 enrolled were in the high schools of that city; and 30 in each 1000 enrolled graduated. Or, to put the foregoing figures into another form, which may make their significance somewhat clearer (my desire is to be perfectly fair in this matter) let them be looked at as follows:—

In the regular order of the public school curriculum

the time extent of a complete course of study, from primary entrance to graduation day, occupies twelve years, four of which are allotted to the high school; that is, one third of a pupil's complete public school life is spent in this department; and if all the children who enter school were to live and complete the entire course, one third of the entire school enrollment would be in the high schools.

But, as already noted, death and other unavoidable destructive forces naturally reduce the ranks of the pupils as they advance through the grades, so that it is only just to discount the possible attendance in the four upper grades a decided per cent. Making such allowance, it is surely within bounds to say that at least 5,000,000 of the 18,000,000 children enrolled in the public schools should be alive and in the high schools, if these schools had their proportionate share of the total enrollment, based on the amount of time that they require for their work. The statistics quoted show 915,067, or not quite one in five of the ultimate possibility.

Seen from a similar viewpoint, since the high school course occupies four years, we might expect out of a possible 5,000,000 high school enrollment, after making the required reductions, at least 1,000,000 graduates each year. We do have 111,363. And since almost the whole purpose and endeavor of the entire public school curriculum, through all the grades, is to produce graduates fitted to enter college, it is surely not extravagant to assume that a majority of those so planned for and wrought upon should leave school so prepared — that is, we ought to have at least upwards of 500,000 public school graduates holding college entrance diplomas each year. We do have 37,811.



The score of the State of Illinois, measured by the same rule, would show that, out of a total enrollment of 1,002,687, about 200,000 ought to be in the high school, and the yearly graduating roll ought to be not far from 80,000. The high schools of that state had an attendance of 63,392 and graduated 8137 in the year 1909-1910.

Measured in the same way, the Galesburg, Ill., schools with a total enrollment of 3814 ought to have about 1000 in the high school, and graduate about 200 each year. Their record for the year 1909-1910 shows 767 in the high school, with 115 graduates for that year. For the five years ending June, 1910, this school had an average of 125 graduates for each year.

A comparison of these figures shows that in the matter of enrollment, the high schools of this country, as a whole, have acquired about 20 per cent of possible efficiency, those of the State of Illinois about 35 per cent, and those of Galesburg, Ill., about 65 per cent. Compared as to output of graduates, counting those of all sorts, the whole country has reached a point of about 10 per cent of efficiency, the State of Illinois about the same, and the Galesburg schools about 67 per cent for the past five years. The data furnished offer no means of comparing the number of college-diploma graduates in the different schools I have mentioned.

Perhaps I ought to say that I have mentioned the Galesburg schools for two reasons: first, I happen to know about them; and, second, they give a practical demonstration of what has been attained by the application, in a measure at least, of the principles and methods advocated in this treatise, as I shall show later. Doubtless there are other schools in this country that can



show as good, or perhaps a better, record than this school presents. I hope there are many such. The thing to labor for is to bring all our schools to even a greater degree of efficiency than any have yet attained.

7 Here is another significant fact, which I take from the United States Bureau of Education Report, before referred to. In Table "A" of the report, the percentage of pupils in public high schools preparing for college is given, for a term of years, namely, from 1889-1890 to 1909-1910. This table seems to show a steady decline of the comparative number of students preparing for college, in that the percentage given for the year 1889-1890 is 14.44, while for the year 1909-1910 it is but 5.57. And the record between these two dates shows a steady and quite regular falling off between the two percentages quoted. That is, it would seem from these figures that a smaller and smaller part of all the children of all the people are each year preparing to enter college, and yet this diminishing factor still controls the courses of study for all attendants of the public schools.

Now I am well aware that statistics are often misleading, but it is surely fair to point out the fact that the figures quoted show that only a small portion of all the children of all the people attending school on a given day are among those who complete the entire school course, while a much smaller portion are fitted to enter college. And yet the fact remains, which I have so often stated, that the great bulk of the courses of study used in our public schools are planned, from primary entrance to graduation day, as if *every* pupil were to be fitted for college. There's the rub.

Many of my readers will shake their heads over these *statements*, and perhaps some of them will rub their

eyes, not to say "sit up and take notice." But I believe all the record I have given is practically true to present conditions, no matter what we may wish about it. *Verbum sat!*

But if one doubts what has been stated, here is another good way to prove existing conditions from the other end of the line, as it were, one which can be easily tried by people who are curious in these affairs: Go through a train of cars on almost any railroad in this country, and ask every adult passenger, man or woman, "Are you a college graduate?" and see what per cent of affirmative answers you will get. Of course the record will vary greatly in different parts of the country, and on different trains of cars. A train composed entirely of "Pullmans" would yield a much larger per cent of yes's than would one of "day coaches" only. This goes without saying. But a fair average would not be hard to find, and such average train would yield results that would be quite directly in point.

Or, go along any city street that is a thoroughfare for all sorts and conditions of men and women, such as Broadway, New York; Washington Street, Boston, or State Street, Chicago, and ask every adult person who passes you in a "rush hour," the question noted in the previous paragraph, and see what per cent of affirmative answers you will get. To be sure, such a proof would not be wholly satisfactory, but it would certainly be a significant "pointer."

Not to push the proofs further, it is evident to all thoughtful people that only a very small percentage of all the children of all the people ever graduate from college; and it is equally clear that it is not fair to hold up to college-entrance requirements all the children who

never will even enter one of these institutions, for the sake of those who do or can use such educational ways and means. This is the crux of the whole situation.

And so it turns out that, if the classical idea of what constitutes an educated man is to prevail as a test of what our public schools have so far done, our attempts to educate all the children of all the people have not yielded, so far, the results its promoters hoped for, planned for, and honestly expected. That is certainly not an extravagant statement to make at the end of our fifty years of trial of the means and methods we have used for that period of time. This is a matter of common knowledge, and it is only a truism to make the remark. Yet it needs to be made.



## CHAPTER XVI

### WHAT IS WRONG IN ALL THIS?

Grounds for Criticism studied — Chief Causes of Failure stated — Personal Equation neglected — Uniform Methods not suited to Wide-varying Conditions — New Factors in the Modern Educational Problem — Machinery — Scientific Thought — Democracy — Extension of the Field of Knowledge — Impossibility of Any One Mind compassing all the Now-known — The Rights of the "Born Short" under these Conditions.

CRITICISM is never a pleasant task, and that is doubly the case when a popular idea or institution is brought into question. The public school system of this country has been, and is, exceedingly popular among nearly all classes of our people, and to put an interrogation mark before any of its ways is really an act to be shunned if it could rightly be avoided. But what I have shown in the foregoing pages is evidence that I have not originated, and that I am not responsible for. If that evidence reveals the fact that our public schools are not doing what it was supposed and promised they would do; if they are not educating all the children of all the people as it was declared they would when all the people consented to be taxed for their support, — then it is only just to urge that they "make good," and to inquire wherein and why they have failed to reach the high mark they were set to attain.

Now, in view of what has been said up to this line, it must be very evident as to where some of the

trouble lies. My belief is that the *chief cause of the inability to show results commensurate with the hopes of those who exploited the plan of universalizing education in this country lies in the failure of the founders of the public school system to realize the natures and kinds of material they had to deal with in their undertaking.* Their *theories* regarding the possibilities of the human mind, as it is embodied in different individual men, women, and children, did not tally with the *facts* in the case. *Practically, they made no allowance for the personal equation in the problem — an item which must be reckoned with by any system or device that attempts to deal with individual humanity. They took no account of the "short" and "long" qualities embodied in the children whose development they undertook to manage, factors which form the chief attributes that must be considered in any successful attempt to bring individuals to their possible best. These fundamental elements, in all children, were denied or ignored, almost absolutely, in the original fashioning of our public school system.*

Again, the matter to be taught and the methods of teaching the same that were utilized as a means of educating all the children of all the people were never designed for, or suited to, any such general and widespread purpose. Both were originally planned and exploited to fit a few of the children of a few of the people for a few stations of life. The whole appliance was primarily worked out to suit the needs of certain classes of people, whose best interests were served thereby; and it was assumed that this same appliance would meet the multitudinous wants of the masses of children and people such as our country now has. That is, *a special appliance was used to achieve a universal result, and the*

machine was not able to produce the output required of it.

If this assertion needs detailed corroboration, be it said that the chief function of the system of education which was fastened upon the public schools of this country was originally intended to make book-learned men — clergymen, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and to give a scholarly adornment to the sons of gentlemen who had money enough so that they would never have to earn anything more, surely not by the work of their own hands. *The system grew up and was developed across the water.* In process of time it was duly imported and established in this country through the media of the classical colleges which were founded here to propagate the cult from which they sprung. These are brief and truthful statements of well-known facts. Is it any wonder that the denouement proved that the means adopted were inadequate to the ends to be attained?

Again, since the inauguration of the methods used in our public schools, three important factors have come into our national life, social, mental, and political, which were wholly unknown when the system was originally set up. These are the universal use of machinery, the positive revelations of modern science, and a conglomerate democracy such as the world never before saw. Any one of these three might well overthrow all previous conditions of human life and its environment. What this potent trinity, taken together, has done, and what their combined product renders needful to be done to-day, is almost beyond computation. It is only a truism to say that these three forces are the chief constituents in the lives of all our people, individually and collectively, at this moment. Indeed, they are so important



that a brief review of their relation to modern life and education must be given here and now.

As to machinery, it has revolutionized the domestic life of all our people. On the feminine side see what it has done within the memory of one no older than I am. My grandmother sheared sheep, carded wool, spun yarn, wove cloth. My mother could spin and knit. My wife can crochet; and if I had a daughter, it is hard to say what she might or might not be able to do. No one is to blame for this condition of affairs, which is as true of most families in this country to-day as it is of mine. My mother earned a living by selling the product of her own hands made under her own father's roof tree. Should her granddaughter be required to support herself, she could only do so by going out of her home and into the highways of life. Machinery has made these changed conditions for all the feminine part of our population that must needs work for a living. I am not complaining of this, but I am emphasizing the fact that these new conditions that confront one half of our population cannot be ignored by any system whose business it is to fit this part of our community for life, to bring its constituency to its possible best.

And on the masculine side of the issue, the changes which machinery has wrought in the last fifty years are equally in evidence and potent. My father reaped grain with a sickle such as Joseph's brethren used when that young dreamer went out into the fields to give them a message. His grandson can sit on a "harvester" and reap and bind more grain in one hour than his progenitor could so dispose of in two days of hard work. This one instance tells what might be extended into volumes. *And it all means that the young men of to-day are*

circumstanced not at all as were the young men of the time when our public schools came into being, and for whose needs they were fashioned. Our whole industrial life, for both male and female, has been changed by machinery; and the educational needs of our people, especially our young people, have changed accordingly. The original plan for educating children in our public schools knew next to nothing of the industrial conditions that obtain to-day, nor was it fashioned to meet any such requirements. That is the first story.

Again: Modern scientific thought, which has come into vogue since I was a boy, has wholly changed the mental status of our entire population. Never before have so many people thought for themselves as now in our country. The unyielding relations of cause and effect were never so generally recognized as they are to-day. All these new elements and forces in life are exploited and scattered broadcast among our people as never before by books, magazines, and newspapers, which fill the homes of our people to the utmost limit of our domain. The result is that dicta and dogma that were once accepted without a question are now challenged on every hand, and are asked to give reasons for what they assert. This is a condition that powerfully affects our mental status. And yet its possibility never entered the minds of the original promoters of our public schools. They made no provision for it, and that they did not must be considered in the formation of any scheme that aims to bring every individual in our country to his or her possible best.

Again: All this new order of things, industrial and mental, has been hurled bodily upon such a mixed-up mass of humanity as our world never till now saw gath-



ered together into one place. The heterogeneity of the population in this country is absolutely unique. Our fathers never dreamed that it ever could be what it now is. Our citizenship is composed of people who have come from all nations of the earth. It represents every language, religion, custom, idea of right and wrong, political faith, that the sun has ever looked down upon. We have nearly a hundred millions of these people under our flag to-day; they are red, white, black, yellow, and mixed, and we are trying to run the whole outfit on a New England "town meeting" plan.

All these conditions are *new* and they have forced new problems upon us as a nation, which we are compelled to solve or to suffer for not doing so. And in the solution of such problems, there is no single agency which is as potent as that of the education of all the children of all these people, whose well-being is involved in the premises. For all these varieties of people have children, each after its own kind, and it is the education of all these children of all these people that we have undertaken, and it is proving to be no easy task.

Once more: The enlarged fields of knowledge which modern research and discovery have so recently developed renders it entirely impossible for single individuals to do what they easily did a few years ago. When my father left college, he knew about all that was taught in the institution where he had studied. Latin, Greek, some mathematics, a little philosophy, and considerable history — these made up the whole curriculum that any scholar was asked to master in those days. One uniform diploma served for all the graduates from any or all classical colleges in this country at that time, and that *was* a good deal less than one hundred years ago.



But to-day? Our Illinois State University advertises five hundred possible courses of study in its curricula. It would take a student a hundred years to master all the studies taught in this single institution. And what is true of this great school is equally true of scores of similar institutions all over this country. No such condition existed when our public schools were founded, and no provision was made for such a situation.

And yet, for the most part, as I have more than once remarked, our public schools are now working on practically the same lines on which they were first projected. Nearly all our colleges still demand Latin as an entrance requirement, and all accredited high schools are thereby compelled to make this study a chief item in their curricula. The result is that the great bulk of the grade work done below the high school is still forced to be fashioned as tributary to a classical college entrance requirement, as originally proposed; and if pupils stay in the grades or in the high schools at all, they are compelled to do just this work or none. If they are "born short" on these lines, if they are unable to function mentally as the curriculum demands they must, they are dropped out of the schools that all the people pay for, and are thus left wholly unprovided for by the institution that was inaugurated for the benefit of all, and not for the needs of a select few. These are facts that we are all familiar with, and they embody some of the things that are positively wrong in the present status of our public school system. They show in a most pronounced way why it is that our schools do not now educate all the children of all the people.

## CHAPTER XVII

### CAN ANYTHING BE DONE TO HELP THESE MATTERS?

No Wholesale Answer possible — Due Credit given for what Schools have done — “Class” Tendency in High Schools — Adaptation the Great Lack in Present System — Former Psychology should be revised — Pedagogic Methods need Modification — College Methods of Adaptation should be extended to All Grades of Public Schools — The Use of Books — Heads and Hands — “The Schools for the Children, not the Children for the Schools.”

In attempting to answer the question which forms the caption to this chapter, let it be said at the outset that no complete and wholesale reply can be given, here or anywhere else, that will fully meet all the requirements in the case. The issue is too large to be settled immediately and right out of hand. But I believe some suggestions can be made that will help the situation considerably. And that is something.

But before making suggestions, I wish to say that I believe I fully appreciate all that our public schools have done for the children of this country, and I want to give them full credit for all they have accomplished. In some ways, there is no limit to the benefit they have been to our whole community. They have taught untold thousands of foreign children how to speak, read, and write the English language with a considerable degree of accuracy. By mingling all classes of our children together in the same schoolrooms they have fostered a spirit of genuine democracy that has *been* of the greatest value as a social equalizer among

our people. I believe it is on this count that our schools have been of more value to us as a nation than in any other one way. The great bulk of all the children of all our people have been closely associated together for a more or less extended period of their lives, in our public schools. They have worked together, played together, sung together, quarreled some, fought a little, loved much, and formed associations which have been of great benefit to all parties concerned. All of which is for the best.

These things are specially true of the lower grades of our schools. As the pupils have advanced in the ranks of school life the "class" tendency has become more and more in evidence; and this is specially true of the high schools, where, particularly in late years, the aping of college ways has done much to create social divisions among the students, — a condition which surely is not for the best. Still, these are minor matters, and if only all the children could be kept in the schools, such things would be but trifles. I merely note them in passing.

Be it said, then, that before any great change can come which will result in a more perfect adaptation of the work done in our public schools to the needs of all the children who ought to attend them, we shall have to have, first, and above all else, a revision of the psychology that the founders of these schools held; and also a great change in the pedagogical methods which these men inaugurated and established in our public schools. We also shall have to change the popular idea of what an education is; of what constitutes an educated man; of what the purpose of education really is, and of what it will do for individual children. All of these changes in the present order will surely have to



be made before our schools can redeem the promise of their founders, and fulfill the hopes of those who sustain them. Something of what form these changes may take, as time goes on, I venture to predict, as follows:—

In the first place, I am very sure that, gradually, our public school teachers, of all classes, will come to recognize the truth of the “born short” and “born long” psychological theory; and that, in the not distant future, they will begin to modify their demands upon their pupils accordingly. This means that a single and uniform curriculum, which extends from primary entrance to graduation day in the high school, the same for each and every pupil, no matter what his or her natural abilities may be—a course of study which, from start to finish, has for its chief end and aim the fitting of the pupil to enter a classical college—that such a method of procedure will one day be a thing of the past, as having been thoroughly tried and found to be, for the most part, wanting. In any event, this system has ignominiously failed to educate all the children of all the people,—to deliver the goods it bargained to turn over to those who paid the bills.

My chief reason for this belief lies in the fact that our colleges and higher institutions of learning have all come to recognize this primal psychological fact of “shorts” and “longs,” of the variability in the mental functioning power of their students, and have fashioned *their* curricula accordingly. I do not know of any higher institution of learning, anywhere in this country, which now limits its students to a single course of study and issues only one form of diploma. The “elective” principle has become universal among all these institutions.

Not one of them could long exist if it abandoned such method and practice. They grew into this condition slowly. The most conservative of them rebelled against it to the utmost. But they have all finally had to "come to the scratch," — to accept the inevitable. They have done this loyally, in most cases — when they had to. There have been some blunders, not a few mistakes, and occasional failures in what has been done; but on the whole the psychology which is grounded in the "born short" and "born long" idea, and the means and methods thereby required, have come to the fore, and they are here to stay.

7 Is it not manifest to all thoughtful people that inevitably the same principles and methods which have won out in our higher educational institutions must be applied in all the educational work that is done in all the educational institutions of this country? This question will call forth a storm of protest from many of my readers, just as the first declaration of the doctrine of individual aptitude as a factor in educational possibilities roused almost a rebellion in classical college circles. Staid professors in these institutions raved against the heresy, and set their faces like a flint against the theory. But it was all of no avail. The same thing will one day happen in our public schools. For truth is mighty, and it will prevail. It takes time for it to arrive, but it will one day reach the goal that is named and that cannot be countermanded.

The details of how all this can be worked out, no one can now give. I shall try to outline a few of these in later chapters; but, for the most part, their full elaboration will have to be the work of years of careful experimentation and of scientific research.



Again : Our present schoolroom methods, of making memory the chief factor in the acquirement of an education will be abandoned, for the most part, in the new order of things and as time goes on. As I have already said, all this way of working came from a time when there were no books. *Now* we have books, plenty of them. The thing to do in this new order of things is *to teach our children how to use books, instead of trying to make walking encyclopedias of them.* But more of this later on.

Again (and this will be harder to achieve than the two changes I have just mentioned, because it involves so many people), we shall have to change the popular idea, which is now deeply seated in the minds of nearly all our citizens, as to what education really is ; what constitutes an educated man ; what education is for, essentially ; and what it will do for each individual child. These necessary changes are of the greatest importance, and I shall discuss them at length in following chapters, in the order in which they are here stated.

Finally, we shall have to introduce methods into our school work which will train *hands* as well as *heads*. And because the great bulk of our children must live by the work of their hands, by the same token a very large part of the education and discipline we give them will be such as will enable them to do their work well, whatever it may be.

In a word, as I said in another book, long ago, "we shall make our schools fit our children instead of trying to make our children fit our schools." We shall establish ways and means in our schoolrooms which, because of their perfect adaptation to the needs of all the *children* of all our people, will keep all these children in our



**schools through all the period of their school-day years ;  
and we shall stop throwing the great bulk of our chil-  
dren out of the schools which all the people pay for,  
because they cannot conform to classical college entrance  
requirements.**

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE LAW OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The Inalienable Right educationally stated — How it can obtain in the Public Schools — School *Master* and School *Teacher* — Logic and Love — Superintendents and Principals — Grades and their Modifications — Force and Punishments — “Survival of the Fittest” *vs.* “Feed My Lambs” — The Boss *vs.* the Leader — Democracy and the “Square Deal.”

OF course, the fundamental thing I am standing for in the position I have taken is the ultimate right in the premises of each individual human being. What such right is can best be estimated by considering the primal and final law of individual human life, in all social relations. This law is as follows: Each and every individual human being, anywhere and everywhere, in all the world, has an inalienable right to do what and how he will, so long as such doing does not interfere with what some one else, who has the same inalienable rights, does, or wishes to have the opportunity for doing. That is, no one has any right to compel me to do this or that, simply because he wishes me to, or has the power to force me to. All of which means that, in the development of myself by means of the educational processes that are brought to bear upon me, the first items to be looked after are my nature, my needs, my possibilities, and *not* what will please somebody else, causing me to conform to a mold I was never made to fill, to be fashioned into something I was never designed to be. And what is

right for me, by the law of the individual is right for all my brothers and sisters, everywhere and always. Our Father in Heaven has no pets.

So then the supreme question, so far as this treatise is concerned, propounds itself in this way. Is it possible to exploit our public schools upon the basis here outlined, this law of the individual; and, if so, how can it be done? I firmly believe such a consummation can be reached; indeed, that it must be reached, if our schools are to become a permanent factor in civilization, as I feel sure they are. How it can be done it is not so easy to tell. But I venture to prophesy a little, again, as follows:—

In the first place, the *predominating spirit* which now is to the fore in the management of these schools *must be changed*. This spirit is now supremely manifest in the word "schoolmaster," which we have inherited from monarchy, and which has its root deep down in selfishness. (I saw Head Master printed on a public school room door, only a few days ago.)

Now this term "schoolmaster," and the spirit it implies, must give place to the term "school teacher" and the spirit it implies; and there is all the difference in the world between the two. The one means command, the other means service. The one says: "I am here to make the child do so and so, and he has got to do it, or go." The other says: "I am here to help the child come to the best there is in himself, he being what he is."

The one says: "No matter what form a given child is intended to develop into, or what original abilities he may have; if he comes here to stay, he has got to be formed as I and the system determine, and we will compel him to go out fashioned from a common model."



7 The other says: "It is my business to try to find out, and to try to help each pupil to find out, what he is best fitted for; what his or her limitations and possibilities are, and how best these latter can be developed; and if we fail to come at this the first time trying, we are to keep trying again, in other ways, till we do find what is best, and then do this in the best way we can." The one holds that the children are made for the schools. The other holds that the schools are constantly to be made to suit the every need of all the children of all the people.

The one has ever in mind an unyielding System, and strives, above everything else, to see that it is rigidly enforced. The other has ever in mind the individual child, and stands ready to warp or discard any or all preconceived systems and theories that, experience proves, hinder that particular child in its natural development.

7 The one has a psychological theory which declares that the minds of children are like pieces of white paper on which can be marked whatever we will; the other, that each and every child is born with a mind of its own, and with capabilities that are limited in certain directions by its body, and that these things must be taken into account in the education of this particular child.

The one declares that any man can do whatever he wills to do, regardless of conditions. The other acknowledges that, so far as this world is concerned at least, we are finite beings.

The one makes distinctions, and says that the so-called best people should go to the fore and should *command all the rest*. The other is anxious to help keep

the whole procession moving, and that each shall count only one of the crowd.

The one favors classes, the other is for the masses; one is for some, the other is for all. The one is monarchical, from start to finish. The other is genuinely democratic, viewed from any and all points. The one is military, the other is civil. The one coerces, the other leads. The one looks down upon the children, the other loves them.

Now all this does not mean that the teacher is to be the slave of the child, that children are to come to school when they happen to be pleased to do so, and go when they like, and do just as they have a mind to when they are there. Logic may put it that way; but logic, the dogmatic sort, has little to do just here. It is love and not logic that shows the way in all the higher walks of life.

Will there be superintendents in the new order of things; and will there be principals? Most assuredly. The only difference will be in the mental and spiritual attitude of these functionaries. Instead of their chief aim being to command, it will be to serve. The ever uppermost question with each such official will be: How can I best serve, how best promote the success and welfare of the teachers and pupils which are committed to my care? There are such superintendents and principals now at work in our public schools—a good many such. But we must all admit that there are others, and that they are not all that way. Our aim must be to make that kind as numerous as possible.

Will there be grades? There will be children in each school, and in each room of every school, who are so much alike that, on some point or points, they can be



successfully taught together in a class. But it will not follow that all the children who are taught together in any one class will necessarily all be taught together in any other class, much less in all other classes. There is where all the trouble has come in our graded school work, as thus far done; and, this evil eliminated, nearly every other wrong or mistake connected with our public schools will disappear. If the law of the individual can be faithfully observed, not to the letter, but "in spirit and in truth," there can be no doubt that these schools will have gone a long way towards successfully fulfilling the mission whereunto they were given being.

Will there, then, be no compulsion, no punishment, no exactions, no force?

There will be restraint for the wrongdoers — for those who interfere with others by their acts. There will be consequences, such as must ever result from mistakes and blunders, and from deliberate transgression. There will be positive requirements that each keep in his own place without detriment to any of the others. There will be the exercise of force wherever such is required to maintain the law of the individual, never otherwise. (There may be corporal punishment, even of a very severe sort, for those who are only far enough along in the procession to understand the language of bodily suffering; but this means will never be used for its own sake.)

And this does not mean anarchy, or chaos, by any manner of means. It simply stands for the establishment of the schools upon a basis of love for all, instead of favors to a few; of justice instead of partiality; upon the spiritual plane instead of the material plane;



upon the principle embodied in the words "feed my lambs" and "one of the least of these my brethren," and not upon "the survival of the fittest," as that phrase is generally translated and understood—namely, that the brutally strongest have a right to crush and annihilate everything and everybody that their unfeeling power can overcome and put under their feet. The whole change is from a lower to a higher plane, from the material to the spiritual; and that way all life is working. So, some day, this order of things in our schools must come.

So again I say, the purpose of all work is to change conditions, and a change in conditions always means the passing of what is and the establishment in its place of what is to be. You and I are the workers in this particular case of our public schools, and we must work for a change of conditions in these schools that shall cause them to harmonize with the law of the individual, and not leave them under the domination of a system that cares more for itself and its own perpetuity than for the children whom it is set to care for. There is the issue, clear and undisguised. The old must go, the new must come, and you and I must work to bring this consummation about.

And, in doing this, we will not rail at, or blame, or curse what has been, or what is. "All these things must needs come to pass." But they have come only that they might pass, and to "prepare the soil for superior growths." And so you and I will plant, for these superior growths in our public schools, the seeds of the law of the individual, which, sprouting and growing up, will, in time, root out the law of the boss, which has had its day, and so must go under. This is what the live

teacher of to-day must stand for, if he would fill to the full his place in the procession that goes towards that which is great. In our schools, as everywhere else in our democracy, we must give every individual "a square deal."

## CHAPTER XIX

### WHAT IS EDUCATION? WHO ARE EDUCATED MEN?

Inherited Beliefs — The Common Answer to these Questions — The College-bred only counted as Educated — Criticism of this Definition — Lincoln and his Cabinet — Bill Nye on Lincoln — Definition of the really Educated Man — Proofs offered — Night Ride with "Old Mike" — "Onto his Job" — Application of this Measure of Men — Whitman on Work and the "Loving Laborer."

I HAVE said that one of the most difficult points to overcome in this problem of the education of all the children of all the people, is the deep-seated wrong idea that nearly all our citizens have, as to what education really is, and as to who really are truly educated men. These ideas, so generally held, have their roots in the far past. What they are, we have only to look into our inherited beliefs to find out and appreciate.

Thus, what do you, dear reader, think education is? Have you ever defined this to yourself, or have you merely taken somebody else's opinion about it? In either case, put it to yourself now, and see what your reply will be.

Of what do you think an education consists? Whom do you consider an educated person?

Regardless of what your answer may be, I believe that, if the average man or woman one meets in the street should be stopped and asked, "Whom do you consider an educated person?" the answer would be practically this: "An educated person is one who has a large and extended acquaintance with, and memory knowledge of, books."



I do not say that is the definition you who are reading these lines would give, but I firmly believe that is the answer you would get from the average man or woman, anywhere in this country, and the chances are it is your inherited conviction. And this is only another way of saying that it is the popular idea, the idea that is generally held by our people.

And if this same average individual were asked to point out some one or more whom he considered as educated, he would undoubtedly name some clergyman, lawyer, doctor, school teacher—in a word, some book-professional man or woman.

Now I am not saying that he would not be right in this, in a way. I am not saying that book-professional people are not educated people. But I want to say, and say it large, so that "anybody, anywheres, can understand it," as poor little Joe has it, that these book-professional people, educated though they may be, are by no means the only educated people in the world. That is the point that I want to make, and make strong.

Nor would the one who made the supposed answer I have noted be at all to blame for his reply. He would only be voicing the general idea of the age regarding education and educated men and women. If he had wished to tell it all in a word, he might have said a college-bred man is an educated person. That is the common idea, and there are the best of reasons for its being so. All the training of all the schools, for centuries, has tended to develop such a definition; and the great bulk of the men and women who wish to be counted as educated, have insisted on such a conclusion being drawn. So it is perfectly natural that things should be as they are in this respect.

Nor is this altogether ill. The only trouble about it is, that this view of the case is not broad enough. It is too exclusive. It shuts too few in and too many out. It means some and not all. The idea expressed in such a definition is, that these and these only are educated people. There is the trouble.

Only college-bred people educated people? Think, now! Think of the truly great and noble men and women you have known. Think of those you have been acquainted with who have lived successful lives, who have been a blessing to themselves and to all their fellow men with whom they have come in contact; who have done things and have known about things—oh, about so many things! Maybe the things they knew about were not set down in books. Perhaps some of these people knew very little about books, one way or another. But they knew things. They did things. And by all true tests they were educated people.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Lincoln was not very book-wise. The range of his reading was very limited. He surely never went to college. But who shall dare say that Abraham Lincoln was not an educated man? Why, this great saved nation of ours to-day tells what a wonderfully educated man he was. Yet the college-bred men of his cabinet, and their likes all over the country, feared that he would fail because of his lack of education! Two college-bred members of his cabinet wrote him a letter, before he had been president three months, in which they virtually told him that, on account of his lack of educational training, it was evident to them that he was unequal to the task of being President of the United States; and that, if he would turn the affairs of state over to them, they would take care of



them as they ought to be taken care of, while he might appoint the postmasters and hobnob with professional politicians! Fact!

Nor were the men who wrote this letter sinners above all others. They only voiced the sentiments of book-professional men, the country over, at that time. Bill Nye put the situation very graphically when he wrote in his "History of the United States," "Cultured society was continually having cold chills run up its spine, for fear Mr. Lincoln would put sugar and cream in his cold consommé!" The current idea was that the President could not be an educated man because he had never had a chance to avail himself of what was then popularly supposed to be the only means of acquiring an education.

And again I must insist, lest I be wholly misunderstood, that, in saying all this, I am not saying one word against colleges, or college-bred men and women as such, or against the kind of education that such institutions and such men and women stand for. The only point I wish to make is, that these people, these institutions, are not *all there is* in the premises. They are not "the only." There are others; and they, too, must be counted in, in any true and comprehensive definition of what an education is, or of who are educated men and women.

If I should be asked whom I count as educated persons I should reply: "All persons are educated who have so developed the powers and abilities that are within them, individually, that they can each do well the things they undertake to do." That, to me, is the real test of any person's educational attainments. It is not a matter of diplomas, it is not a matter of how or where one has reached such a condition; it is a matter



of what that condition really is. The proof lies in ability to do and not in what one is supposed to be able to do. It shows itself in what can come out of an individual and not what is alleged to have been put into him.

I gave this definition some years ago before an audience, and it afterward elicited a remark from one of my hearers that I must note just here.

The night before, I had spoken in another town, some hundred and fifty miles from where I was then speaking. As trains then ran, I had to make a night ride between the two towns. It was something past midnight when I went down to the station to board the train. The town was a division station on the road, and the train was already in the yard and undergoing the necessary refurnishings, as I came up.

Now it happened that the 'bus from which I alighted set me out just alongside the engine that was to pull the train over the next division of the road; and, just at that instant, the engineer climbed down from his cab, to give his machine a final oiling for his run. I took a look at him (I always take a look — a good long look — at an engineer), and I recognized him as an old Irish engineer friend of mine whom I had known a good many years before, when he was running on an Eastern road. So I called out to him, "Hello, Mike!"

He flashed his torch in my face, and, in spite of the years that had passed since we had last met, recognized me, and gave me a hearty greeting, for old times' sake. We chatted a minute or two, and then he said, looking at his watch: "But time is up now, an' I must finish 'ilin' her. But put up your grip on the box, an' ride wid me." So I did as he told me to do, put my grip on the front

end of the seat on the fireman's side of the cab, and rode with old Mike a hundred and fifty miles that night.

And it was a ride never to be forgotten. It was a wild, stormy night. The wind was blowing and howling out of the northwest, and the snow was piling in huge drifts before us as we went. It was a ponderous engine that old Mike drove. The six drivers under her were each a full seven feet in diameter, and four revolutions of her wheels sent her nearly a hundred feet along the track.

It was the night express. There were eleven cars behind us, carrying hundreds of men, women, and children, and thousands on thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise. In the Pullmans, scores of people were sleeping, just as safe as though they had been at home in their beds. As Mr. Taylor used to say, the train was "a world on wheels," and a wonderful, mighty world it was.

And old Mike sat on that box and whirled that train through space at the rate of fifty miles an hour, in a way that almost took my breath away. He knew every switch, every rail, almost every tie that he ran over. Sometimes he would plunge into a snow drift that half filled the cut ahead of us, and it would seem for a minute as though an avalanche had buried us miles deep. And then, again, through a long stretch of open prairie, the wind would sweep across us as if it would blow us off the track. But through it all—the night, the storm, the darkness, the drifts, and the tempest-fury of the winds—through it all, that old man sat with his hand on the lever, and without a single false move, or the loss of so much as a mill of the treasure committed to his care or a wink of sleep to a passenger aboard, he drove his *train safely to its destination*, and then, in a quiet, un-



assuming way, entered his report of "on time" on the record book at the end of his run.

Beloved, I take off my hat to that old man as I would to the greatest soul on earth. Let us uncover before kings and princes of the realm, on occasion. It may be well to do so. But in the presence of such a man as old Mike, let us not only stand bareheaded, but silent.

I watched him in the most tense moments of that run, and there was a radiance shining through the wrinkles of his old face that almost made the darkness light about him. His eye gleamed and spoke a hundred things that tongue of man can never tell. His hand held the lever with a touch that was as delicate and sensitive to what it was controlling as is the finger tip of the most skillful violinist to the vibrations of the string it presses down. I was in the presence of an artist in his line, of one of the truly great in life.

Well, the next night this old engineer came to hear me talk, and in my talk I gave the definition of an educated man that I have given above, and he heard what I said. After it was all over, and the audience had gone away, he waited for me at the door, and after a complimentary word or two, he said: —

"But I can bate you all out of the face in giving a definition of an iducated man."

And I said, "Let it come."

Whereupon he replied, "Why, don't you know that any man is an iducated man when he's on to his job!"

He was right! His definition is better than mine, and it lets a whole flood of white light in where there was surely mist, not to say, in some cases, the blackness of darkness before. Doubtless it is a crude way of saying



it, but there is a strength and directness in the remark that clears away the rubbish to a degree.

Grant all that may be said about the "breadth of vision and loftiness of view" that is reckoned as a constant quantity in the generally accepted estimate as to what goes along with an education, and which are usually counted as being a never failing asset in the belongings of a supposed-to-be educated man. These things may all be real, and they are all right, when they are genuinely present, and when their possessors keep their feet on the ground, even if their heads do touch the stars. But when they are only vision and view, as is too often the case, they are a delusion and a snare. Unless the man who has breadth of vision and loftiness of view can *do things*, unless he is "onto his job," he is a poor excuse for a man, and a very worthless member of society, take him how you will. I would not be harsh, or unfair, but is not this the truth, when we come down to the bottom facts in the case?

Indeed, I believe it is right and fair to hold Mike's method of proof as a sure test of the reality of any one's profession as to his being an educated man. Let him who makes such a claim be brought to this trial, as to whether or not he is "onto his job," whatever that job may be, and we shall all soon see how, like a refiner's fire, such a test "proves up." We shall see it burn and purge away all pretense and vainglory, all the dross of glamour and show, and reveal only the pure gold of what the man really has and is. None who are truly educated will even think of shrinking from such a test of their claims. None who are unfit but will be forced out, on being subjected to such trial. It is fair to all; *it is unfair to none*. Let's try it on — ourselves!

Meantime, let us bring to proof a few who have heretofore been judged only by the old standards, and see how they endure the test.

Ministers are counted educated men, anywhere and everywhere. I do not say they are not educated men, but bring them to old Mike's proof, and then see.

Did you ever see a clergyman who was not "onto his job"? Were you ever forced to sit "under the droppings of a sanctuary" whose overflow was a total stranger to the river of the water of life? If so, could you honestly say, or even think, that such a minister was an educated man?

Lawyers are counted as educated men. Did you ever know a lawyer who was not "onto his job"? If the empty pocket books that have been made void by incompetent "counsel" could set up a wail, there would be a noise.

Doctors are counted as educated men. Did you ever see a doctor who was not "onto his job"? If our graveyards could tell stories, they would startle multitudes with their revelations.

School teachers are counted as educated. Did you ever see a school teacher who was not "onto his job"? If the thousands of children who have been made the victims of incompetents in the schoolroom could tell the truth about what has been done to them, their stories would make the very stones cry out.

But I will not extend the list. The principle involved is all I care about. My point is, that old Mike's test is a true one, apply it where we will. Bring to it not only those I have named, but bring also any and all others, from any and all crafts, trades, or professions whatsoever, and the result is the same. If they are "onto

their jobs," they are educated in their respective lines. If they fail in doing well the work they undertake to do, they are not educated, no matter what their reputations for education may be, or what their written or printed credentials may say about it. The test is final, and from it there can be no appeal. There is no higher court to bring the case before.

It is the business of our public schools so to train all the children of all the people that they shall be onto their respective jobs, all of them, when they are grown to be men and women; for so, and so only, will these same men and women make first class citizens; so, only, will they fill to the full their respective places as worthy members of the commonwealth; so, only, will they demonstrate the proposition that the state is justified in taxing all the people to give all the children an education.

7 This, then, is what an education really is; namely, a training for life that will fit the individual to do well the thing he undertakes, no matter what that thing may be. This is genuine righteousness. Its pursuit is the building of character, and it is all good for the soul. And this is only another way of saying that it is religion, pure and undefiled.

Truly Walt Whitman says, "How close our work is holding us to God, the Loving Laborer through time and space." Only that is education which teaches us to work as God works, true to the line, every stroke. ✓



## CHAPTER XX

### WHAT EDUCATION MUST DO FOR A CHILD

Memory-knowledge and Manual Labor — Work generally counted a Disgrace — Predominance of Girls in High Schools — Results of this — Reasons given for Such Condition — Monarchy and Democracy Again — The "Throne" Idea — College Products and Physical Labor — Professional Men and Sons of the Wealthy — Rural Theories and Practices Resulting — Labor not a Curse but a Blessing.

WE can never educate all the children of all the people till we change our inherited thought as to what an education will do for a child. As things are now, there is one idea that is most prominent in the general mind on this score, and it is one of the ideas that it will be exceedingly difficult to get rid of because it is so generally diffused among our people. It is the notion that if a child gets a good memory-knowledge of books he will thereby be relieved from the necessity of working with his hands, and that to work with one's hands is disgraceful.

It is really wonderful how widespread and deep-seated this notion is. It pervades all classes of society, from the lowest to the highest. An old washerwoman said to me, the other day: "I'm workin' hard to keep Mary Ann in school, so I am, so that, whin she gets as old as her poor old mother is, she won't have to work as hard as her poor old mother does." That tells the whole story, from that viewpoint; and, put in varying

phrase, according to the different ranks of society, it embodies the popular idea all along the line.

A little while ago I visited a high school in one of our middle-sized cities, and I stood by the side of one of the teachers, in the hall, as the pupils passed along to their classes. The great majority of these pupils were girls (it is so the country over), and a fine-looking company they were. (This also is common.) And I said to the teacher: "I wonder if one of those girls would be willing to marry a man who had a hard hand that had to get dirty in doing its work."

And the teacher turned to me with a look of amazement, tintured with disgust, as she replied: "Why should any one of them ever be willing to do such an unworthy thing, a thing so thoroughly beneath her? I trust they have all been educated above such things." And there you are!

And yet, the great bulk of the men of this nation have got to get dirty hands in doing their work. The vast majority of our men folk have got to earn their living by labor that necessitates soiling of the hands. There is no such thing as putting this fact out of the way, and we might as well face it, one time as another.

And these girls that I saw in that high school are the natural mates for young men who have to dirty their hands with manual labor. They are from similar families, have similar parentage, live in similar homes, eat at similar tables. They are the sisters of young men who have to "work for a living." They should be the sweethearts and wives of young men who have to work for a living — helpmeets for them, in the fullest sense of that practical old word. But will such a training as *the girls I saw* were having in that high school, and

under that teacher (and the case is not exceptional), bring them to their own — their natural own, on this count? And if it does not do this, but does the very reverse of this, what about it?

Now the fact is, there ought not to be such an overwhelming majority of girls in our high schools as we now find there. And there would not be — there will not be, when we fashion these schools along new lines, on the basic idea of the real place of work in the world.

As it is now, the great bulk of our boys drop out of our schools at the end of the grammar grade, and there they and their sisters part company.

And this is bad. They and their sisters need to be kept together, for more reasons than I can stop to tell about here. But won't you take time honestly to think out a few of these reasons, and ask yourself what can best be done about these things, in view of their far-reaching importance — think what can be done about them in your school, or with your children?

If you stop to think about it thus, you will see that the cause for our popular thought regarding the lack of dignity of manual labor reaches back into the far-away past, and that it is grounded in the monarchical idea of social life and of political institutions. As generally thought of, it is counted to be the mission of manual labor to serve. It is almost never considered as worthy for its own sake. Imagine one saying "manual labor for manual labor's sake"! We have been taught to say "art for art's sake," time out of mind. We have also been taught that "that's different." Is it? I know that it is generally thought to be so, but is it?

The fundamental principle that underlies a throne is that it, and all that it stands for, must be served; and that



he who serves is — must be — held in subjection, and therefore humiliated by such service. Men and women who have breathed free air do not like to be in subjection and humiliated. And because manual labor has for so long had the badge of meniality fastened about its neck, for this reason men and women who wish to count themselves as “free and equal” are anxious to put themselves and their children as far as possible from the supposedly accursed thing. Right here is the core of the great desire of the multitudes to free themselves from what they have been taught, for ages, is the degradation of labor.

There is another thing that leads to the same result, and that gives a special trend to what the multitudes desire to do in these days, in lieu of working with their hands, shows up very plainly when we look at the history of what has so long been called education, and of those who have been counted as making up the educated classes. A moment's thought will reveal the fact that none of these educated people worked with their hands; and the result of going to educational institutions, as they have existed, time out of mind, has always been something other than manual labor. Clergymen, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and always the sons of gentlemen who had money enough to live without working — these, and their likes, have been the “output” of the schools for centuries. I have said that before, but it needs saying more than once.

And so, because these two things have existed together, because those who have been to the schools did not work with their hands, the notion grew up that, somehow, the one was the cause of the other, and that to have an education exempted one from the necessity

of manual labor. And because manual labor is counted as something to be shunned on account of the bad name attached to it, and since men and women have learned to think that an education will free them from its supposed thralldom, for these reasons multitudes of those who have labored with their hands in the past are especially anxious to have their children acquire an education so that they will be relieved from the necessity of work.

How often have I heard some good old farmer and his wife say: "We don't want to have our children work as hard as we have worked. We had better move to town and give them an education, so that they won't have to work when they are grown up." And how often have I seen these same people move to town, prompted by such a motive, bringing with them a healthy and hearty lot of boys and girls of whom they might well be proud, but of whom they are practically more than half ashamed. And how often have I seen these same children fit only to be ashamed of in a few years, the boys cigarette fiends, carrying canes and walking like dudes, and the girls devoted to dress and society only!

I have not one word to say against farmers moving to town to educate their children, or against their truly educating them in any way they can; but one thing that I do protest against is the purpose that underlies their trying to educate them, in so many cases, and as so often seen. They are the victims, parents and children alike, of the fallacious idea that labor is a curse, and that a book education will free one from its taint. They are far more to be pitied than blamed; but, more than all, they need to be helped out of their unfortunate con-



dition, they need to have their eyes opened to the truth in the premises.

What our public schools must do is to enter upon such courses of instruction and training as will dignify and deify labor. Their work must be such as constantly to impress upon the children who attend them the fact that no one calling, in and of itself, is more sacred than another, no one more honorable or more degrading than another. They must teach that the plowshare is fully as worthy a piece of steel as the sword, and that it is at least as honorable to serve humanity in a corn field as on a battle field. They must instill into the minds of the children the great truth that any and all work well done is honorable, ever and always, and that a botch is an abomination in the sight of God, no matter where, or surrounded with what supposed badges of honor and respectability the shoddy-weaving be done.

Doubtless it is a part of the work of our public schools to fit some of our boys and girls for professional work that will not require manual labor at their hands; but since the great bulk of our young people must labor with their hands when they are grown, it is the duty of our schools to fit them also for their particular work in life, work which they cannot avoid, and which it is wicked to teach them they ought to wish or try to avoid.

We shall never succeed in educating all of the children of all of the people, till we first succeed in establishing *in the minds of our people the great, basic truth that labor is not a curse but a blessing*, and that it is not the purpose of an education to free a child from the necessity of labor—manual labor included—when he is grown; but that its end and aim is to fit him so that he



can do, to perfection, the work in this world that he undertakes, or is set to perform. When the people fully comprehend and accept this idea of the mission of education in social life, then our schools will be fashioned accordingly; and then, and not till then, will they accomplish what their founders, and those who have fostered them, have always hoped they would one day accomplish.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SYMPATHETIC VIBRATION

An Analogical Essay — Why this is Needful just here — Wireless Telegraphy — The Principle of "Sympathy" Stated — Tuning Fork Illustration — "Responsive Humming" — Application of the Principle to Schoolroom Work — What the System now Demands — What Teachers are thus Compelled to do — What should be done — How a Strong Vibration may Liberate Others — Functional Powers which are Clogged — The Expelled Boy who became an Expert Chemist — Answer to the "One-sided" Objection — Relative Values of "Hums" — Crowbar *vs.* Marconi Point — The "Real Thing."

AND now, having cleared away a lot of the rubbish which the years have piled in the path of what seems to me to be true education and right educational theories and methods, as a prelude to the positive constructive work that lies before me I am going to sandwich in, just here, a sort of analogical essay under the title of Sympathetic Vibration, which I believe will be worth to the reader all the space it takes up in these pages and the time it takes to read it.

I thought, at first, to just use the term "sympathetic vibration" and let it go at that. But on talking with teachers and some of my friends about what was meant by these words, I found that not one in scores of them knew anything about it — an experience which convinced me that I must explain the principle in detail if I used it at all. (To say this may not be complimentary to my *friends* and the teachers I talked with, nor to the reader,

but it was true of those I spoke with, anyhow. If you, dear reader, know all about it now, skip this chapter. If not, read it all, carefully.)

Wireless telegraphy has done more than any other thing in recent times to set one thinking about still more wonderful phenomena that may lie in the same general direction — may be based on the same principle as this marvelous invention, namely, those of sympathetic vibration.

This principle is nothing new in the scientific world, but Marconi's application of it, in heretofore unknown regions, bids fair to revolutionize the civilization of the age. The fable of stealing fire from heaven, and of what that act did for mankind, is as a trifle compared with what this talking through the air is destined to do for humanity. Already it has changed all the possibilities of war, both on land and on sea; and when the fighting ability of a world is remodeled, the whole social fabric is affected to a tremendous degree. And that is only one of the marvels of this latest of modern discoveries.

Briefly stated, the principle is this: If a certain vibration is set going in a given plane, its waves go out in all directions from the originating point, and pervade all the space covered by a circle of greater or less extent. Now if, a vibration having been set up, there be within the affected space any other body or bodies that would naturally give forth just the same number and kind of vibrations as are given out by the one already in motion, then those others will take up the vibration, on their own account, and begin to vibrate in harmony with whatever is giving out the original waves. That is, they will vibrate in *sympathy* with something that is already vibrating, rather than because they are directly set in



motion themselves. This is what is called sympathetic vibration.

Take a simple illustration, which you can easily verify if you care to do so: Suppose you take two common tuning forks which, being struck, both give forth the tone of A of the musical scale. Bore a hole in each of two wooden blocks, and set the forks up on their handles in these holes, one in each block. Set one of these blocks, with its fork inserted, on a table at one end of a room, and put the other block and fork somewhere at the other end of the room. Now if you will strike one of these block-supported forks vigorously; or, better still, draw a fiddle bow across it with considerable force, and so set it to humming, so that it will give forth a good full tone, and will keep this up for a few seconds, the fork at the other end of the room will begin to vibrate without your touching it at all, and you can thus cause it to give out so strong a tone that it can be heard all over the room. Indeed, when you get it once well humming, from sympathy with the original, you can put your hand on the first fork, the one you made to vibrate directly, thereby stopping its vibrations, and the fork that was made to hum sympathetically will keep on vibrating for some seconds afterwards. This is a very simple and beautiful experiment, and well repays the making.

This principle of sympathetic vibration is the basis of Mr. Marconi's wireless telegraphy, only he uses magnetic vibrations instead of sound vibrations to secure his results.

Now suppose, instead of having two A tuning forks, you have two *sets* of similar forks, covering all the tones from A to G in the musical scale. Suppose these to be mounted on blocks, as before, and one set put at one

end of a room, and the other set at the other end of the room, as in the other case.

Now if you strike the A of one set, the A in the other set will vibrate sympathetically; but that is all the response you will get from the whole row of forks. The B, C, D, E, F, and G will be as silent as though there were no such thing as vibration in all the world. The same thing will occur if you strike any other one fork, as B, or C, or E, etc. The corresponding fork will vibrate, and all the rest will be dumb. Or, if you strike all seven of one set, at one and the same time, all the other seven will vibrate in response, each fork picking out its own particular vibrations from what seems to be a jangle of sounds. None of them will get mixed up, none will fail to respond.

Now, suppose you had a row of seven forks, ranging from A to G, on one side of the room, and on the other side a row of forks that had never been tested, but which were theoretically supposed to be the same as those you knew about; and suppose, further, that it was your business to set up vibration in the forks that you really did not know about, but which were supposed to be so and so, by causing them to vibrate sympathetically with your own bank of forks. And suppose, too, that you had been taught that the only correct way to set up sympathetic vibrations in an unknown row of forks was to begin with your own A fork, and to secure a response from a corresponding fork of that particular key, from across the room, before you proceeded any further, or tried any other forks in the row! So you strike your A, and look for a sympathetic vibration from across the room. And suppose there be no response, nothing but silence like the grave!



And then suppose you say: "I *must* get a response from this A, and I *will*!" So you pound away on your A, and keep pounding, and still nothing comes of it from the other side of the house. You pound and listen, and then pound and listen again, but it all goes for nothing.

Then suppose you fall back on the authorities that you may have spent years in becoming acquainted with, and which say: "In order to awaken a sympathetic vibration in a bank of forks across the room, first strike your own A, and get a sympathetic response from that before proceeding further, etc." Moreover, suppose the System you are serving under says to you: "You *must* get a response from A before you do anything else. In order that the forks across the room may be regularly graded, it is necessary that the A be developed in the row, and that particular tone be first forthcoming. The System demands this, and you must bring about such a result if you expect to stay where you are." Then what?

Then, in the language of the wicked world, "you are up against it," and it is no wonder that you grow desperate. So you pound away on your A till you are nearly wild; and when no response comes you do one of two things: either you manage somehow to fabricate some kind of a noise on the other side of the room that, for the time being (examination day), will sound something like an A vibration; or else you say, "The forks on the other side of the room are worthless, and I will throw them all out and be rid of them, for they are not worth bothering with!" And so you "drop" or "expel" the whole outfit!

*Is my analogy too severe?* I think not. The fact



is, there is nothing the matter with your A, nor with the row of forks across the room. The only trouble lies in the fact that you are trying to do the impossible, to arouse a sympathetic vibration where there is nothing in sympathy to vibrate. The only difficulty with the row of forks across the room is that *they have no A in their row!* But they may have a first-class B and C and D and E and F and G. And if you would only strike, or be permitted to strike, one or all of these in your own bank, there would be no trouble about getting a response from their correspondents across the room.

Or, having tried to get a response from A, and having failed, would it not be good common sense to try some other fork before condemning the whole row opposite, or before throwing them all out to rust in the gutter?

Or, knowing that there are forks in the other bank that can and do vibrate "just naturally," would it not be a shame to muffle these and declare that they should never give forth a single wave of sound till an A-tone of more or less volume could be developed?

How simple all these questions seem when they relate to tuning forks! I believe they are just as simple, and as apropos, when they relate to boys and girls. These "born short" pupils, of the thousand-and-one varieties, fail to respond to our efforts to arouse them sympathetically because there is nothing in them that will, *at that time*, vibrate in harmony with the particular vibrations that we set up. If you doubt this, watch any such pupil, and you cannot fail to be convinced of the truth of my proposition. In such cases, the child's eye gives forth no answering light, his face is as blank as a bare wall, and his whole being expresses only inanity. But touch this same child on a key that he can vibrate

in harmony with, and you have a live being on the instant. We all know how it is.

"But," some one says, "should not every well-balanced set of tuning forks have an A? Is it right to permit such a bank to continue to exist in a partially completed condition? Should we not make it our chief endeavor to remedy the deficiency, and so make perfect harmony possible?" Or, applied to boys and girls, the question is asked: "Are we not in danger of making one-sided people if we permit them to grow where they are naturally strong, and do not compel them to keep an even pace with all the faculties of the human mind?"

To which I make reply: In the case of the tuning forks, it is doubtless possible to buy the missing links in the open market, and duly install them in their proper places; but when it comes to boys and girls, the thing cannot be done in that way. There is no shop in all the world that manufactures human capabilities and keeps them on sale!

And, more than that, I do not believe there is a thousandth part of the danger that is so generally talked, of developing one-sided people by permitting them to move out strongly along the lines of their native abilities. On the contrary, I am thoroughly convinced that the most promising way to get an individual to grow strong where he is naturally weak is to give him a chance to use his strength where he has the ability to do so.

If a given bank of forks seems to be minus an A, you can never develop one in that bank by merely sounding your own A. But strike all the rest of your row, and get a good strong vibration from the other *forks in response*, and something may come of it.



Perhaps the A in the other bank is cobwebbed, or muffled in some way, and if you can give the rest of the row a good vigorous shaking up, so that its very foundation trembles in response, you may, perchance, jar the A loose, and get a hum from it when you were least expecting it. I have seen such an outcome more than once. But I never saw much of any good come from trying to *force* a sympathetic vibration. That is not nature's way — God's way!

As a case in point, I once knew a boy who was an "incurable" in school for years. He had been suspended and expelled, time and again. When he was about sixteen, the superintendent met him on the street one day, and said to him: "George, is there anything in school that you would really like to study?" And the boy replied: "Yes, I've always wanted to study chemistry, but I shall never know enough to do it." And the superintendent said: "If you will come to school to-morrow, I'll put you into a chemistry class, and you needn't study anything else." The boy agreed, and the experiment was tried.

Before the first term was over, this boy slept in the school laboratory every night for a whole week, in order to keep continuous watch of some delicate experiments he was making. He stuck to the work till he had done all the chemistry that could be done in the local school; and then, though he was woefully deficient in nearly all the other high school studies, the superintendent succeeded in getting him admitted to the chemistry course in one of the best colleges in the country, where he led his class in his favorite study.

I saw a letter written to the superintendent by this boy when he was in college. There was scarcely a



misspelled word in it, and the composition was good. Yet he had been a proverbially poor speller in school, and he was once expelled because he simply would not do written language work. It is fair to say that there were shortcomings in the letter, but these were chiefly grammatical errors, which were the result of environment in the boy's early life, such as the use of "done" for "did," and "saw" for "seen," etc. These things are bad, I grant; but is it not far better to have a live, decent boy, such as this young fellow became, with grammatical errors included, than to have a worthless loafer, such as he would most surely have become had he not been set on his feet as he was? That is the point, and there can be but one answer.

The last I knew of the young man, he was holding a responsible position as chemist in a large commercial establishment. And if you should happen to meet him at dinner, or in a parlor, or in any ways of common social life, you would never think about his being one-sided.

Oh, perhaps if you are "long" on ancient history, and should try to draw him out on the details of your favorite subject, he might not vibrate fast or hard just there. But he could easily turn the tables on you by "a turn about" which would be only "fair play." You might detect a shortage in his grammar, and be sorry for his misfortune, but you would be a prig if you failed to see in him a very bright man, or if you turned him down because of his weak place.

And this should be remembered, too, when we talk about one-sided people. We are very apt to set a man down as belonging in this class if he fails to respond to *our own* particular hum. More than that, we are wont

to count some hums as very much superior to other hums; and we are quite apt to be cock-sure that our own particular hum is the finest in all the world. But the fact is, there is not nearly the difference in hum values that there is commonly supposed to be; and, always, a genuine vibration of almost any sort is to be preferred to one that is merely a motion gone through with because it is the proper thing, or one that has been manufactured by somebody else, and somehow fastened to the party who merely shakes according to rule.

A truly sympathetic vibration is a joy to all who feel its animating thrill. Its counterfeit is not only a bore to all parties concerned, but it is a dismal, soul-destroying lie. An education that is gained by the sympathetic response of the student to what he is taught is a live thing that will endure, and always be full of value and delight. Knowledge that is acquired by learning things only because they are in "the course" is a dead thing that will be buried out of sight, and utterly forgotten in a few years, at most. In the brief space that it shows semblance of life it will prove itself valueless and a delusion; and, buried, it will never be missed.

A machine-shaken crowbar is not a sensitive Marconi point. Nevertheless, it may be a first-class crowbar. The only trouble comes in trying to play it off for what it is not, and never can be. A good crowbar is as valuable in its place as a Marconi point is in its place. But it is not well to try to make either take the place of the other. The analogy holds good in the schoolrooms of our public schools, and in the attempted education of all the children of all the people, everywhere and always.

## CHAPTER XXII

### EDUCATIONAL VALUES

The Regular and Conventional Views on this Subject—"The Humanities"—Ability to read Latin and Greek a Transient Acquirement for most of the Classically Educated—They do not "hum" to these Studies—Ex-President Eliot's Testimony—Educational Value of Manual Training—The Real Measure of any Educational Value—Latin Races, Mathematics and Language—The Negro and Logical Ability—Disregard of such Facts depletes the Ranks of the Ought-To-Be-Educated—Reforms that must follow.

THE methods of education that I have advocated in these pages naturally suggest the subject of educational values, which must be fairly considered from this new pedagogic viewpoint, in any comprehensive treatment of the issue in hand.

Since time out of mind, educational theorists have had much to say regarding the relative educational value of studies of various sorts, and their corresponding worth as a means for developing a human mind; and, for reasons that I cannot go into here, the great balance of opinion has been, for many years, in favor of the classical studies of Greek, Latin, and history (especially ancient history) as being the most potent in this respect. In addition to these, mathematics has sometimes been included. The classics have been called "the humanities," and it has been given out, over and over again, ever since Plato's time, that the pursuit of these *particular studies* would produce a wonderfully mollify-



ing, gentlemanizing effect upon all those who pursued them.

There is no question but that this claim is true, in some cases, perhaps in a great many, where people vibrate that way; but it is very far from being true for mankind in general—for all the children of all the people.

The simple fact is, there is no one study, or set of studies, that will produce uniformly good results in all cases, for all children. It is a matter of individuality, of personality, here as elsewhere in all the ways of life. One study has educational value for one child, another for another. But, always, those studies which will set a given child a-humming are the ones, and the only ones worth mentioning, that have educational value for that child. If Greek and Latin will do this for any child, or for any number of children, all right. And there is a considerable number of such children, I am sure; but that the number is as great as the devotees of the "humanities" idea have led us to think—of this I am greatly in doubt.

How many men or women do you know who can read either Greek or Latin to amount to anything? How many pupils have you ever had who really vibrated in response to the classics? Some, surely, but not very many.

A college president told me, only a few days ago, that he did not think five men in one hundred who had studied the classics in college could read either Greek or Latin, to amount to much, five years after graduation day. The statement is his, not mine, and he is a classically educated man, one who believes in that sort of thing. I could but wonder, though, how truly the

ninety-five, who forgot within five years the languages they had spent so much time upon, how truly they ever hummed to these languages, and of how much educational value these studies really were to those who pursued them.

On the other hand, a friend of mine who studied French for only one year, and that under a very poor teacher, thirty-five years ago, now reads that language almost as well as she reads English. But she hums to that language. Her geometry, though, that she spent weary months upon, is a dead thing to her now, and has been so for years. The question is, was it ever alive, or is any study ever alive that one does not naturally vibrate in harmony with while pursuing it, and retain, readily, ever afterwards? What do you think?

In the presence of facts like these, to make a course of study that insists that a pupil must vibrate to these classical studies, or to any other particular studies, if he stays in school at all, is just as bad as possibly can be.

On this point, so excellent an authority as ex-President Eliot, of Harvard, has recently said that "whatever study is well and thoroughly taught in public high schools, taught in a way to inspire interest and give trained mental power, is of genuine educational value." Which is only another way of saying that any study that the pupil vibrates in harmony with, is, for that child, a valuable means for his genuine education. When the day dawns that sees all the college presidents in this country in harmony with ex-President Eliot on this count, that day will note a tremendous advance in all the educational work of America. Speed the day!

For the sake of emphasizing a point that needs bearing down on just here, I call the reader's attention to



the fact that the above-quoted opinion from President Eliot is broad enough to include the discipline and culture that comes from business and manual training, from actual, practical work with head and hands. Here is a source of educational value that has never been very highly thought of, that has never counted for very much, especially in the eyes of those who have been reckoned as educated men and women. Yet, that it has a measureless value of this sort for multitudes of children, is every day becoming more and more apparent. In a way that I shall speak of later in greater detail, manual training initiates and develops capacity for the reception of genuine knowledge that is a great factor in true educational growth.

Besides this, there are thousands, yes, millions of children in this country that will vibrate in this plane of manual work (or, at least, the beginnings of their vibration can be assured here), who can never respond to the stimulative energies included in a regular graded school course, to amount to very much. But, once genuinely vibrating in a plane to which they naturally respond, the possibility of getting them to respond in still other planes is greatly increased. The point is that, as things now are, these millions of children who fail to respond as the System declares they must, if they stay in the schools — these children are dropped out of the schools altogether, thereby losing that culture, training, and guidance for mature life which their years demand, and which the school ought to give to every child in this nation. Manual training would keep multitudes of these children in the schools a great deal longer than they now stay there, all of which would be just so much to their advantage.

So, then, the basic need in determining for each child



what studies are of educational value to him or to her is to find out those that will secure a genuine response from that particular child. This does not mean that a child is never to be asked or required to set himself vigorously to work to accomplish a task that may not be altogether pleasant, at the outset, — not that at all. Neither does it mean that if a pupil does not take immediate delight in a given study, that this is proof positive that he is "born short" on that side, and so should never be asked to pursue that study further. We all know, though, well enough, just what it does mean. We know that it is practically useless, and often wicked, to hold a pupil that we have proved, over and over again, has no aptitude whatever for a given study — who does not vibrate to its stimulating energy in the least — that it is a sin to keep such a student at such work, regardless of the way he is. That is the whole story. Such work will rarely if ever do him any good at all. The chances are many to one that it will do him positive harm. I have seen such results in multitudes of cases, and so have you, if you have honestly watched the phenomena.

The right thing to do is, if we find a pupil in our public schools who actually fails to vibrate to a given stimulus, after having honestly tried to do so, but who will vibrate in some other plane — the thing to do is to permit such pupil to vibrate where he can, and so keep him in the schools. He should never be cast out because he is unable to vibrate according to the course, or just as his class vibrates.

Now, the fact is, there are not only individual children, but there are whole races of children who lack the ability to vibrate in certain planes, but who can and will vibrate, strongly and well, in other planes. Thus, the

children of the Latin races are, for the most part, "short" on the mathematical side and "long" on the language and artistic sides of their make-up. Any teacher who has had experience with children of these nationalities will verify this statement.

I was walking on the streets of a Pennsylvania town with the superintendent of schools one day; and, as it was a few minutes after four, the school children were just on their way home. I noticed a large contingent of Italian children in the groups that we met (it was in the mining region), and I asked the superintendent how these children got along in his schools. And he said:—

"Oh, they're no good. They go a little while, and then they all drop out. You will notice that you hardly saw an Italian child over twelve years of age in all that we have met. We can't hold them, to amount to anything."

And I said: "Why not? What's the reason that they don't stay with you? Do they drop out of their own accord, or do you drop them out?"

To which he replied: "Oh, they can't do the work. They haven't any head for what we want, not one in a hundred of them."

"What haven't they got a head for?" I asked.

"They all fail in arithmetic!" he replied. "We simply can't get them to do enough number work to keep them in their grades. They almost always fail in their arithmetic examinations, and so can't go on with their regular grade work; so they stay in the same grade till they get tired of it, and we get tired of them, and then they drop out."

It was an honest answer. But—

"How are they in their language work?" I asked.



"Wonderful!" he replied.

And then he went on to tell about a couple of boys, whose parents had recently come to this country with them, and who had placed them in school but a few weeks before. The boys knew not a word of English when they entered the school; and yet, he said, in an incredibly short time they had learned to read, and also to write beautifully.

"It is really wonderful," he added, "how quickly the little rascals will pick up our language, not only these two, but the whole lot of them. But in mathematics they are good for nothing. These two boys I have spoken of will go for a while, but arithmetic will knock them out before long, as it does all the rest of them. They are almost all of them happy just so long as they can read a book or make pictures, or do anything in the line of drawing; but we simply can't get them interested in arithmetic enough to hold them in school."

Now this seems to me a great pity, that these children should be put beyond the sphere of influence of public schools just because they are naturally non-mathematical. For, good sooth, what is mathematics that it should be made the *sine qua non* of good citizenship? And good citizens is what we want to make out of these same Italian children—good American citizens. That is what the public schools are for, above everything else,—to make good citizens, whether they are good mathematicians or not. And one can be a good citizen, even if he be a poor mathematician!

But if we fail to take care of these same children; if we drop them out of the schools before we have done much of anything for them, simply because they are *unable to pursue successfully a study which the colleges*



demand for admission to their doors — if we do this, how can we much longer ask all the people to pay for the support of these same schools? That is a question that must keep us watchful, and that will be asked in dead earnest, too, in the not very distant future.

And there are many other similar situations, all through our schools. Negro children, are, as a rule, deficient in mathematical and logical ability. Boys, take them as they run, are short on the side of technical grammar and rhetoric. What thousands of them have fallen by the way for this cause! You know them, don't you? They should not have been forced out, or lost out, of our schools for so slight a cause. When it had been proved that they could not attain to the college-made requirements of the school course, then a just and a common-sense-made course, one that would meet their needs and abilities, should have been made; one that they could attain to, and so could have stayed in school. That is what the schools are for, to keep children under their training influences, and not to turn them out because they fail to come up to a standard that an outsider has fixed — one that really has no more right to direct the school affairs of this nation than any other private institution has. There should be no such thing as graft in our schools, and the colleges of this country should receive no more favors from them than do the blacksmith shops or the farms.

The records of high schools show that a very large proportion, sometimes as high as fifty per cent of the pupils who enter them, drop out at the end of the first year. And a further study will reveal the fact that at least eight out of ten of the pupils that have thus dropped out have "failed to pass" in Latin or algebra,

or both, as I have before stated. These are notorious facts, which are known to every high school teacher. It is getting to be time for the people to realize them, and to have something done for them, too.

And let me say again that, in calling attention to these facts, I am not "attacking the colleges," nor am I saying one word against their work, as such. I am only making the point that our colleges and universities are only some among many educational forces in this broad land of ours, and that the particular studies which they insist upon as being of educational value are only a few among many means for developing the human mind, for forming sterling individual character, for making first-class American citizens.

These institutions all have their distinctive educational work to do, and for the most part, they are doing it well, better now than ever before; and they will continue to do it better yet, as the years go by. But they are not all there is in the educational world, and they must not be permitted to dictate to our public schools, nor in any way to hold them in such subjection that these schools shall fail, in large measure, to meet the requirements of practically all the children whose needs they were brought into being to satisfy. They must be permitted to have their share of the work done in these schools. But they must not ask for all, or for an unfair percentage of influence or advantage, in the work done in public schools at public expense.

Neither must they claim that the special studies they insist on are alone of educational value, and that all others are of secondary, or slight importance. Gradually these institutions are coming to recognize, in their *own curricula*, the fact that any study is of educational

value that the student genuinely loves, that he vibrates in harmony with, that he pursues with zeal and with personal interest; and that any study which is undertaken, or labored with, in any other way than this, is not truly educative, but a bore and cheat. Seeing this, our leading colleges are now nearly all conducted upon a system which grants all the points I am contending for. All else that can be asked is, that this method, which has been found of such advantage to the colleges and universities, should be passed on down the line, and so be made available for our public schools, from top to bottom. With this point gained, we can then, in each and every case, give to each and every child the privilege of pursuing such studies as experience proves are of educational value for that particular pupil. And that is all that any one can ask.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### CONCERNING COURSES OF STUDY, DIPLOMAS, ETC.

No Fixed Course of Study suited to all Children — The "Elective" Principle considered — Natural Aptitude of each Child determines what Studies Each should Pursue — "Passionless Intelligence" and "Passionless Purpose" — Getting together of Teachers, Pupils, and Parents — Standards of Scholarship — Past Records regarding Diplomas — Diplomas alike and not alike Compared — Method of Illinois State University cited — The Nonuniform "Credit" Diploma — Galesburg, Ill., High Schools, and this Plan — Testimony of Teachers who have tried this Method — The Practice to descend down through the Grades — Ranking Place thus made for Industrial Studies — Definition of Individual Character — Different Methods of Education brought to this Test — Type Writer as a Moral Factor — Home the most Sacred Spot on Earth — The Right to Tax all the People for Educational Work.

SHALL, then, our public schools have no courses of study? I am asked. And I hasten to reply: No fixed and uniform courses, the same for all the children of all the people; no course which is "that or nothing" for every child — nothing like that. Surely not. We shall simply carry out, in all departments of these schools, the principle of "electives," now so thoroughly established in the leading colleges and universities of this country.

Then, instead of sticking to the idea that the children are made for the schools, we shall stand on the just and rational basis that the schools are made for the children.

Then, in determining what studies each several child

shall pursue, in making up a course of study for each, we shall be guided by the natural aptitude and abilities of that child, by the way he is, and not by the demands of any institution, or set of institutions, or of men—parties who have never seen the child in question, and so know nothing of what he really needs to make the most of himself.

Then the first question in considering the educational work for any particular child will always be: How can we make a good citizen out of this child, an individual who will be a help to the state and society, and not a burden upon both; how can we bring each child to the best there is in himself, and make the most of him, his natural abilities and possibilities being what they are?

Then, we shall not be anxious to graduate a child in any set way, or to have him tally as any and all others have done. We shall not care whether he is fitted for college or not. We shall only be anxious that he is fitted for the life he is to live.

Then, we shall not be satisfied if we succeed in getting a few children in a hundred to stay in school until graduation day, but our ambition will be so to fashion the work of these schools that substantially all the children who enter them shall graduate from them, death being the only cause for failure to come through.

A little while ago a professor in a leading university in this country declared that "the end to be attained by educating children is to produce human beings who are willing to undertake the passionless pursuit of passionless intelligence." I do not object to such human beings. If that is the way they are, all right. Let our public schools do all in their power to help even such individuals to the attainments of their passionless pur-

pose. But do not permit these, and the likes of these, to make out courses of study for all the children of all the people. Because these latter are not passionless. On the contrary, the great bulk of all the children love things, and they love them hard. That is the way they are—the way God made them. And in making out courses of study for all these children, the school to come will take these things into account.

As I have said before, this does not mean that each child shall be left to go his own gait, regardless; but it does mean that the school superintendent, the principal, the child's teacher, the child's parents, and the child himself—that all these together can find out, and do, what is best for the child, can make a course of study suited to his needs, from entering day to graduating day. They cannot do all this at a single sitting, and all on the day the child enters school for the first time; but through the years, as the work goes on, by all working together, they can attain to a successful result, in the great majority of cases.

"But," some one says, "what about standards of scholarship? How can we ever tell of the attainments of any individual? If we cannot know that he has pursued a certain formulated course of study in his educational work, how can we ever tell of the rank he ought to hold in the educational world? Are degrees and titles to count for nothing?" and so forth, and so on.

To which I reply: The matter of educational rank which is determined by titles and diplomas is fast sinking into "innocuous desuetude"; that is, in the great world of the common people. Among certain classes, these things still are reckoned as of great worth; but not so among the masses. For the most part, the



one question now asked of any claimant for honors in any department of life or place is, "What can you do?" not, "What credentials have you on file?" Of course, credentials are of *value*, if they can be backed up by deeds that tally with what they stand for; but in the great world of to-day, the man who "holds down his job," as the people say, does so by deeds, and not by diplomas.

This was not always so. In the institutions that our schools have grown out of, it used to be very different, and it is now in some cases. In such times and places, if a man duly graduated and secured his credentials, he was awarded "a living"; and this he was sure of, so long as life lasted. Now, in the great world at large, it is a minor matter what credentials a man presents, so far as permanency of place is concerned. Such evidence will, in a measure, help to secure a place, but, once in, the incumbent must be able to "deliver the goods," or his tenure is brief — very brief.

Besides this, it does not now mean what it once meant to say that a man has graduated from college — any college. A few years ago, all college diplomas were substantially alike. Now, no one can tell what particular thing or things any holder of a college diploma has studied. The Illinois State University can give its students any one of five hundred different diplomas. That is fine! It is as it should be. When our public schools do the same thing, they will also be doing what they should.

And yet, this same university began on the single-kind-of-diploma idea, or very near it. So long as it clung to this method, its students were few and far between. Since it has changed its policy, the institution

is full to overflowing. It will be so with all the departments of our public schools when they pursue a similar policy.

And this is already being done, to a degree, in our best public schools. None of them has as yet reached the limit of possibilities in the premises, but many of them have made a start, a good start, in the right direction. Some have failed in what they hoped for, but such failures have been largely their own fault. They have still stuck to the course — some fixed course — idea. They have tried to give their students a choice of several fixed and unvarying courses, rather than a truly elective course, suited to individual needs. If a student took any "course," he must take all of that course. This is better than one single course for all, but it is not good enough. But good enough will come later on.

The plan, or method, that seems to be the best is to determine a minimum of attainment that must be reached by a pupil before a diploma can be secured. That is, a pupil must receive a certain number of credits for work done, before he or she can graduate. In such scale of credits, each particular study that it is possible to pursue in the school is given a certain credit value, and the sum of all these credits secured by the pupil must reach a certain amount before any diploma will be issued to that pupil. Thus, suppose the total credits required for graduation be one hundred. In order to secure this number, successful work in Latin may count for so much, algebra for so much, bookkeeping for so much, manual training for so much, etc. Each study successfully pursued has a given credit value, and when the total credits amount to, say one hundred, or some other *fixed number*, then a diploma will be issued. The face



of the diploma shows just what studies the holder has pursued, and how successfully he has done the work undertaken.

If these studies are such as are required for entrance to college, well and good. Such diploma is a "sesame open" to any college of which the school issuing the diploma is accredited. But if a diploma is not of this sort, it is still an honor to the holder; for it shows that he or she has stayed in the school and has done successful work therein, and that is all that any or all can, or should, require.

By such a plan each child can get what he needs out of our public schools, and no harm or hindrance will be done to any. Things being as they are, for some years yet the pupils who have college-entrance diplomas will be counted of somewhat higher rank, of somewhat better blood; but the plan will wear this feeling away, and in due time the honor will be assigned, not so much for holding this or that sort of diploma, as for what that document shows as to how well the work that it stands for has been done, whatever its kind may be.

Nor does this mean chaos in our public schools. It does not mean that the pupil can study Latin a few weeks, then drop it and take up something in its place, and then get credited for so many weeks' Latin. Each pupil will be credited for work, in each several study, only when that study has been pursued successfully for the time needed for its mastery to the degree required by the school. In this way each pupil can come to his own, do the work which he and his advisers find to be best suited to his needs, and so the best results can be secured for all parties concerned. Some day our schools will come to this, or something like it.



This system has been pursued by the Galesburg, Illinois, high school for some years, and with the most remarkable success. Before adopting this plan, its graduates rarely exceeded forty per year. At the end of six years' use of the system, it graduated a class of one hundred and twenty-four for that year; and it promises to exceed that number each coming year, as time goes on. During this time, the attendance at the high school has increased two hundred and forty per cent, while the schools of the city as a whole have grown only forty per cent and the population of the city only twenty per cent. Each year more "classical" diplomas (college entrance diplomas) have been issued than ever before; and, in addition, twice as many "elective" diplomas have been issued to pupils who would have dropped out of school, or never entered the high school at all, had it not been for the adaptation of the course of study to their individual needs. For the latest report from this school see figures already quoted in Chapter XV.

The teachers in this school report that they have very little or no trouble about pupils being fickle in their choice of studies—wanting to try first one and then another. In the choice of studies, these pupils are by no means left to act alone, as I have before suggested they should not be, but the greatest care is taken to aid them to choose wisely and well. The aim is, especially in peculiar and unusual cases, to have such choice of studies made upon the joint counsel of superintendent, principal, teacher, parents, and pupil. Of course, this means work, but it is work that counts, that saves the boys and girls, keeps them in school when they ought *to be kept in school*, and makes them proud and happy

over their success in doing well what they are severally capable of doing.

After several years' trial of this plan, all parties concerned are enthusiastic regarding it, and the record the school has made is proof positive of the merits of this method. What has been done in this case is only the advance guard of what will be done by all of our schools some day. It is a practical demonstration of what can be done, in the right direction, by proper methods; and as the first telephone meant millions like it (and better as time went on) to follow it, so this school means millions like it (and better, on similar lines) as the years pass by. Indeed, there are already a goodly number of schools trying this plan, with the best of results.

And it is only a matter of time till the methods now used in this high school will descend through the grades, even to the lowest, in all our public schools. The principle is right, and time will bring its successful establishment. Under its benign workings, if a pupil fails or is "short" in some one or more studies in a grade, he will not be compelled to take *all* the studies in that grade over again till he is able to "pass" on the one on which he is weak.

I know that sentence will make many of my readers, especially if they are teachers and believe in "the system," wag their heads, and say, "How are you going to do it?" And they may justly add, "How, when we have such roomfuls of pupils to look after now, twice as many as we can take care of as they ought to be taken care of?" I admit the pertinency of such questions, especially the last one. Nevertheless, the thing can be done, and it will be done, one day, for it is *right*. And the right will some day be done everywhere. To help



bring that condition about is all that makes life worth living.

This way of working in our public schools will not be effected in a day, or a year, or in several years. It must be slowly evolved. Public opinion must be aroused in its favor, and detailed methods developed for its establishment. But slowly and surely it will come, for only by such means can we educate all the children of all the people.

Of course this means a greater range of work than most of our public schools now undertake, but all this can be provided for as the needs become manifest. It will undoubtedly increase the expense of these schools somewhat, but this need not give us anxiety. Only prove that these schools do the best possible thing for all the children of all the people, and these same people will see to it that the financial needs of these schools are provided for, to the uttermost limit. There need be no worry on that score.

Now the chief changes that will be made in the work done in these schools, when pursued on a basis similar to the Galesburg plan, will be along industrial lines, in the introduction into them of manual training and domestic economy, not only in the high school, but in different forms, in all the grades, from top to bottom. This will come, not as a fad, but as a necessity for doing the best we can for a very large percentage of the pupils that, as God has made our children (the way they are), can only be reached successfully by such means.

And this is not saying that the larger number of our children are low down in the scale of life or that they are far back in the procession. It is only taking them *into account* as they are, and acting accordingly.



And, after all, what are our schools for but to establish character in our children? What is the purpose of education, unless it be the formation of character in the individual? And when can an individual be said to be possessed of a character that is worthy of the name?

That individual has character whose first desire in life, when he has anything to do, is first to find out the eternal and unvarying laws that make for the right doing of the deed he is called on to perform, and then, having found out these laws, to the best of his ability, whose single purpose it is to make his every act involved in the doing of the required deed tally with them. Such a man, such a woman, and such only, has character that is worthy of the name.

Now bring manual training and domestic economy, as means of character building (which is only another word for true educational value) to this test and see how they compare with other things that have for so long been counted as their superiors. What the candidate for character has first to learn, learn so well that the lesson can never be forgotten and surely will not be forgotten in a few years after he leaves school, is the fact that God's laws never apologize, and that every man's work shall be tried, of what sort it is, and that only such work as is done in accordance with these laws will stand. Experience is the only teacher which can impress this lesson upon the pupil so that it will stay. That may seem a hard saying, but we all know it is true.

If you give a boy two boards that are to be matched together along the edges, so that they will make a perfect joint, and set him to work to bring about such a result, you have put such pupil "up against it" in a way that he cannot dodge. If he cuts too deep here, or leaves

a bulge there, a crack will appear when he puts the two irregular edges together, and no mercy will be shown. No matter how his teacher may mark him, the falsehood of his work stands out against him in a way that cannot be hidden. So he learns the lesson of absolute compliance with God's laws in relation to perfectly matched boards. He learns it by means of something that comes within the range of his comprehension, that he can understand, and thoroughly feel the force of.

Or, give a girl a seam to sew, or a loaf to make and bake, and the same thing is true. She learns by practical experience that only by compliance with unvarying law can she obtain results that are really worthy. Her work is within the limit of her ability and her comprehension, and so is of value to her. And so such work tends to build up a regard for truth in the child; and, in time, an honest belief in it, faith in it, love for it, in no uncertain way.

A principal of a large high school once told me that the typewriter was one of the greatest moral forces he had in his school. He said he had put boys and girls at work upon it who could not and would not spell well when they wrote with a pen or pencil. But when these same pupils were placed where their spelling sins stared them in the face, as they did from a typewritten page, that was too much for them, and they would mend their ways. There is great wisdom in this record of facts.

But now give the everyday boy or girl a Latin sentence to translate, or a lesson in history or geography to memorize merely, and see how these compare, as character builders, *for such children*, with the work just noted. Mind, I am speaking of the "everyday boy or girl." I readily admit that for those pupils who love to



translate Latin there is, in the exercise, that which tends to the formation of character in them. If they are born to function in that mental plane, well and good. But most boys and girls are not so born; and to make them go through the motions, with these studies to which they do not respond, does not tend to establish character in them.

There are millions of boys and girls in this country who can and will vibrate and respond to industrial training, in a way that will establish character in them of no uncertain sort, boys and girls who cannot and will not vibrate and respond to bookwork, to amount to much. Such method of training will keep them in school at a time of life when they need to be in school, and when they could not be kept, are not kept, by a regular classical-college-fashioned school course.

It should go without saying that this industrial work is not suited to the needs of *all* children, any more than classical work is suited to the needs of all children. There are a goodly number of children who never ought to take such work, to any considerable extent. If they do not function in that plane, and do function in some other, well and good. Let them hum where they can, where God made them to respond, and so shall it be well with them.

It would be as much a sin to try to make all the children match boards, or bake bread, as it has been to try to make them all take a classical course of study. Each in his own way, so long as that way interferes with no other, does no harm or wrong, is the law; and the law should have freedom to run and be glorified for each particular child.

And, after all, what more excellent work can our



schools engage in than fitting our boys and girls to do the things that pertain to practical life — things that will be of service to them in their homes and tend to make these homes fit places for first class American citizens to live in? What better can our public schools do for our children than to fit them to become worthy inmates of divinely managed homes — homes that are ordered in accordance with God's laws, and so are bits of heaven on earth? Such results will answer the prayer "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is work that is worthy the backing of the state, the earnest support of every citizen. To produce such results, it is right to tax all the people; and if they are forthcoming, the money to pay for them will be furnished without grumbling. But not otherwise.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SOME OTHER CHANGES

Probable Slow Growth of Proposed Changes — Memory Work to be made Less Prominent — Memory a most Treacherous Faculty — Little relied on in the Business World — "The Memories" — Specializing Abilities — Professor Olmstead — Author's Experience — Memory Extortion — "Shall I Pass?" — Colleges responsible for this Condition.

THE establishment of this new order of things in our schools must of necessity be a matter of slow growth. There is so much to be done, our present methods are so firmly seated in their places, and the way before us is all so new and untried, that progress can only be made by degrees. There will be many mistakes, plenty of discouragements, and numberless I-told-you-so's. But, in spite of all these, we shall get on. "The goal is named, and it cannot be countermanded."

Perhaps one of the first changes in method that we shall attempt will be in the matter of memory work, which now so largely obtains in our schools. Now, for the most part, we try to have our pupils memorize what is set down in books. The change will be in that we shall, instead, teach them how to use books. If we can do that successfully, we shall have put them into the line of becoming educated men and women, so far as book knowledge is concerned. And that is enough, on that side.

The fact is, the thoughtful people of the world are now coming to see that memory is not the regal trait in

one's intellectual outfit that it was once supposed to be. On the contrary, we are coming to understand that it is the most treacherous and tricky, not to say dangerous, of all the mental activities. Practically no one to-day, who has regard for things strictly as they are, places any absolute reliance whatever upon memory as a tally sheet. The banker, the merchant, the physician, the scientist, the mechanic, the railroader, all men and women who have to deal with what we call practical things—none of these rely upon memory for their data. They have learned by experience, often of the bitterest kind, how utterly unreliable memory is. So they have ceased to count it as anything more than a sort of temporary asset in their mental furnishing.

This is not saying that memory, in its proper sphere and function, has ceased to be of value;—it has its place in our mental furnishing, and always will have.— But it does mean, first, that memory training, as it was once exploited, as a means of educational growth and development, is not the potent factor for that end that it was once counted to be. It means that merely teaching a child to repeat what is set down in a book has in it very little that is of real educative value. It means that there is now very little necessity for such work, and that the only reason for its still remaining in our schools, as in large measure it does, is the fact that it has always been there.

Besides all this, the most recent, thoroughly scientific, and entirely reliable investigations of modern psychologists have revealed the fact that there is no such thing as "the memory," as it was formerly considered. Instead of this, these men have shown that in each human mind there are "the memories," a whole lot of them,



and all so different! And this discovery will, in due time, change the whole matter of memory training, as it has been exploited for centuries.

We all know, too, that this but recent announcement of what has always been a fact, tallies exactly with things as they are. Everyone's personal experience proves that this is true. Everybody has a good memory *for some things*, and a very poor one for some other things! Isn't it so in your case? It is in mine, and in everyone else's that I know anything about. I have a splendid memory, along certain lines, as I have already said. But for some other things — I am glad I don't have to tell that side of the story!

Nor need I do so, because what is true of me is equally true of you, whoever you are, only in a different way. You can remember some things easily enough. Some you simply cannot forget, though you may ever so much wish that you could. Other things you cannot remember at all. And what is true of you and me is true of all the rest of our brothers and sisters, all over the world — is true of all the people, and of all the children of all the people.

The best memory for places and for faces that I ever knew about was possessed by an idiot who could not be taught to count ten. Blind Tom had a phenomenal memory for music, and would duplicate a piano performance, half an hour long, upon a single hearing. Professor Olmstead carried a whole table of logarithms in his memory, and I once had a teacher in history who could give, from memory, almost any date to be found in a cyclopedia. He tried to make me do the same thing, and I ruined my health for life, trying to do what he did and wanted me to do also. He was a good

man and I respected and loved him so much, and had so much faith in him, that I felt I was in duty bound to do as he asked me.

He said I had a good memory, because I could repeat verses as I did. (I used to repeat poetry to him, and he liked to have me do so. He couldn't do that, but in those days he didn't count that as a significant factor in the matter of what I could remember, and what he could not.) So he set out to make me as proficient in the matter of remembering dates as he was. I broke my health at the task, and it was all so senseless, so utterly useless and entirely abominable, as I see it now.

I have no ability at all for that sort of thing. I cannot vibrate in the least in that plane. I can't even remember the birthdays of my brothers and sisters; and, if my life were at stake, I could not, right here and now, by the aid of my memory alone, tell when Van Buren was President, or the year in which Edward VII was crowned king. And yet my teachers used to say that I had a good memory.

You know just how it is, too, do you not? Well, then, since these things are so, let us act in accordance with things as they are, in the matter of memory, when we try to educate all the children of all the people.

For, why should I bother my head about my brothers' and sisters' birthdays? The family register keeps all that information, in reliable form. So, also, the encyclopedia tells all about Mr. Van Buren and Edward VII. Had my history teacher taught me the true use of a cyclopedia, and spent the rest of the time in a history class in interesting me in men and deeds, and their relation each to each, to the past and to what is to come, my history work in school would then have been of some



value to me, and would not have ruined my health. As it was, I look back upon it now as a horrible experience that I was once compelled to undergo, and my back aches, as I write, because of the physical and nervous breakdown that came to me as a result of the strain that I put myself to in trying to do this and similar (to me) useless work in school.

Yet I had schoolmates who did this work and grew fat on it. They vibrated to that sort of thing. I did not. Why could not my teachers, who were good men and women, every one of them, in other ways, why couldn't they have seen that it was folly, yes, wicked, for them to try to make a date-holder out of my head, or to make me a master of languages? I never had, or showed, the least ability in either of these directions; and what once was, still is. Yet it was held that it would cultivate my memory to do such work, that it would discipline my mind and educate me, and so I undertook it. It was a failure, from start to finish. Worse than that, the work I tried to do was a sin against my being, and I shall suffer for that sin just as long as I live. My teachers did not mean it so, and I have heard them all tell how sin could be forgiven. I wish they could tell me how to get rid of the pain and weakness I now suffer from, and which the work they gave me was the cause of.

I don't like to say these things, and my only reason for doing so is the hope that this true record may keep some teacher or teachers, or parents, or pupils, from doing as I did in these respects.

And so, in the order of things, the terrible burdens of memory work that we now put upon the pupils of our public schools will one day be relegated to the back-



ground, where they really belong ; and in their stead will come teaching how to use books, and how to do things. Of course, if, now and then, a boy or girl delights in repeating what is set down in a book, in memorizing dates, and such like work, such should be permitted to do all this. But the larger part of our children will not go that way. Neither will they be dropped out of school, if they cannot, or do not, go that way.

Will you who read these lines, be you teacher, parent, or pupil, think of how these things are with you ; and then will you try to do the best you can for your pupils, your children, or yourself, on these counts ? Be honest with yourselves right here. That's all I ask.

Next, this change that will come in our schools along the line of memory work will naturally lead to the elimination of that black beast of every pupil's school life, examinations, as they for the most part now are, and as they have been conducted, time out of mind.

For here, also, we are still held in bondage by what has come to us from the days when there were no such means for doing things as we now have. Examinations, as they are now almost universally conducted in our schools, are only the culminating climax of the memory training that is done in these schools. It is a memory extortion, pure and simple. It is supposed to be the final twist which will forever fix in the memory, as a whole, the items that have been put into it one at a time. Its mission is supposed to be that of a sort of solidifier, a forcing into one compact and nondestructible lump what has previously been a floating mass of stuff. With this for a theory, the memory examination screws are put on ; and oh, the agony which that

pressure inflicts upon those who fall under its relentless squeezing — that is, practically, upon all the pupils of the school! Racks and thumbscrews of the olden time were never more cruel and tormenting. "Shall I pass?" "Did you pass?" "I am afraid I shall not pass." "I can't sleep a wink till I know whether I have passed or not!" How many times have you heard these words? How many times have you said them yourself, and experienced the anguish they express? And yet they are really needless, and wholly uncalled-for words, if only these things are done as they ought to be.

Why should we longer put our children to these terrible strains, as we now do? I ask you why? Will you stop and try to think out a good reason? I have tried to think out a good reason, and I am unable to do so. But here is all the excuse I can find for this fearful abuse of what was once a good thing:

The ultimate and only reason for this sort of thing is the demand of the colleges that we prepare pupils to undergo the entrance examinations which they set up for admission to their institutions. That is the whole story in a nutshell, as every one who is familiar with the facts will readily admit. That is the final fact, and it is a fact that requires looking into. That shall be done in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXV

### EXAMINATIONS

Fair Tests of Ability Just and Right — *Laissez Faire* Methods unworthy — Present Practices considered — How these became established — Some Details of Such Work — The Burden Unbearable — A Fair Method proposed — Why not? — Personal Test for Each Reader — The Essence of any Mental Examination Test — Practices in Professions and Callings outside the School-room — Present Methods prove Nothing of Literary Ability or Mental Power — Autocyclopedias — China now and then — The Ultimatum.

IN taking up the subject to be considered in this chapter, let me say at the outset that no true, honest person will ever shrink from being brought to a fair test as to his ability to do well any work that he may wish to undertake. More than that (or rather, previous to that), it is only just, fair, and right that every person who seeks for place or position, or for opportunity to do work of any kind, should be submitted to a fair test of his ability to "fill the bill," if I may say it that way.

I am no advocate for *laissez faire* methods, or for slipshod, happy-go-lucky ways of doing things, here or anywhere. I make no plea that the slouch, the inefficient, and the ne'er-do-weels should not be tested as to their real worth. But I do plead for the millions of our children who now live in agony all the school years of their lives because of this dragon of antiquated examination methods which are now so universally rampant in our schools. I know that, in some of our best



schools, this demon has been exorcised. But the list of such schools is small. We all know that fact.

I am sure it will help to make clear what I wish to say, to review, somewhat in detail, the examination methods of the past, to see how they came into being, and what they have now become.

Like most other present evils, the bad things about modern school examinations have all come out of that which was once good in its way, in its own day and place. Memory examination tests were once the only way of proving the status of pupils who wished to pursue further scholarly work. That was wholly the case in the days when there were no books, or very few to speak of. Among all ancient peoples, and in all such times, this method was the only one that could be used, and that was where the method was developed, and how it came into use. It was once right and just and wise — the best that could be done, then and there.

Besides this, these tests were in harmony with the ways in which pupils in those times received all their instruction. They were taught by word of mouth, and by word of mouth they reproduced what they had been taught.

As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if Socrates ever wrote a line, and the same can truthfully be said of Jesus. There is not, in all the world, to-day, a single stroke of pen, pencil, or stylus that either of these made with his own hand. Socrates talked to his pupils, and Jesus opened his mouth and taught the people, saying. There were few books then — surely none for all of the children of all the people. These, and other teachers of those times, taught without books, and only what they themselves knew at first hand. Furthermore, the

teachers of those days did not teach so very much — very little, surely, compared with what pupils are taught to-day.

Then, in those early times, each teacher would teach the pupil only what he himself (the teacher) knew, and in some cases that was not very much. Indeed, if such process were in vogue now, the sufferings of our children would be greatly mitigated! But, see! No teacher is now confined in his teaching to what he himself knows! He now has books without number, as his aiders and abettors, and he can assign pages and pages of them for pupils to memorize while he himself goes home, and perhaps to bed, and to sleep.

And then, when recitation hour comes, the teacher can sit down with the open book before him, and, with finger on the text, can keep tab on the pupil! Will you stop and think how such accrued advantage on one side of what was once a fair game has resulted to the disadvantage of the other side? The situation is the most monstrous, the most unjust and unfair method of work that exists, anywhere in the world to-day.

This is no fable that I am rehearsing. I am not fighting a man of straw in what I am saying here. Every child, every parent, every teacher in this country knows the truth. The marvel is that we are all as patient as we are in the presence of this persistent evil, this relic of ancient days that still abides with us.

Take a case in point. Suppose a boy in the old days (or new, for that matter) was learning a language by word-of-mouth method, getting his vocabulary from his teacher, and having the forms of words and their arrangement and relations all explained and illustrated, vocally, *as the study progressed*. Now, nothing could be fairer,



under such circumstances, if a test of the pupil's proficiency was to be made, than to subject him to a memory examination, to ask him to repeat words that he had learned, etc. — in a word, to see if he could talk as he had been taught to talk, as it would be fair to presume he should be able to talk, his instruction being what it had been. No one could object to such a test. It would be fair to all parties concerned, and it would prove what one would wish to find out.

But now, compare this with the modern examinations of the pupils in our schools, and of candidates for teaching in our schools, since the advent of books.

Take the same study I have considered above, the examination in some language which the pupil has been trying to learn with books as the chief means, which is the method still used in nearly all language study in our public schools. Just see the difference in the two cases, and how fearfully to the disadvantage of the pupil the present way is. By this method, the pupil gets his knowledge of words by the eye, from a dictionary of the language he is studying; and at least fifty of these words are given him in this way where one would be given if the teacher alone were the source of word supply. The dictionary is always at hand, when the pupil is studying his lesson, and so can be referred to at will. Besides this, the grammar is always accessible, to explain new and unusual forms and phrases that appear in the text. That is, the lexicon and the grammar are the legitimate tools which the pupil can use to advantage in his work. He uses them, learns to depend on them, as he has a right to do, and in this way does more or less language work.

But when examination day comes, *every one of these*



*rightful and useful helps in his work is taken away from him*, and at arm's length of memory alone he is asked to translate, give forms of words, and account for constructions, without any assistance whatever from the *tools* that he ordinarily has been permitted to use.

But, it is contended, this is seldom on new work. An examination is usually upon subject matter which the pupil has had. Granted. But it is getting to be about time for us to learn that the mind of a pupil is not like a private compartment in a safety deposit bank vault, which can be relied upon to hold securely whatever is once put into it. It is far more like a sponge which lies in the open air. It may be sopped till it drips; but the wind passes over it, and what was in it is gone, till it is soon as dry as a dead leaf lying on a parched rock. Perhaps it is more like a sieve which will only hold stuff put into it that is larger than its meshes.

In any event, the fact is thoroughly patent to any impartial observer that this way of testing a pupil's ability is wholly unfair and grossly stupid, and that it puts into the hands of a careless, or a cold-blooded teacher a means of torture which the Inquisition never surpassed.

Just see what a boy or girl is supposed to have "on tap," in memory, ready to be drawn on at an instant's notice, in order that he or she may pass a college entrance examination. Take it in mathematics alone, and in the single study of geometry. It is perfectly safe to say that such pupil is liable to be called on to give, or to work with, any one, or half dozen, out of a hundred theorems. It is equally safe to say that not more than one such pupil in a hundred ever has *anything more than a memory knowledge of geometry*, at

the age of college entrance. The study is one that very few people vibrate to before they are thirty years of age, and not so very many even then.

I once asked, in an audience of five hundred high school teachers and city superintendents, how many were able to go to the board and divide a line in extreme and mean ratio; and there were less than a score who were able to do it, right then and there! Upon bringing these to the test, I found that they were all teachers of geometry, who were fresh from the work!

And yet, every boy and girl who has to be brought to the test of a college entrance examination in geometry must be prepared, not only to divide a line in extreme and mean ratio, but to do more than a hundred equally difficult things, few of which those learned men and women who sat before me that morning could do, if they were called on as I called on them.

And they were not incompetent men and women, these teachers who could not divide a line as asked, on the drop of the hat. On the contrary, they were among the ablest teachers in this or any other country, and there was not one amongst them all who could not divide a line as required, *if they could have had their books!!*

What a flood of light these last seven words throw upon the situation.

And why should not these teachers be permitted to have their books to use in dividing a line, or in doing a thousand and one other things which they learned how to do with the aid of books, and which they can do easily enough if they are permitted to use those same books now, as they once used them? And why should these pupils of ours, month after month, and year after



year, be compelled to pass examinations in books, without books? Can any one tell? The only reasons are that it has always been so; that as the fathers did, so do we; and that the colleges demand that these things continue to be done in this way. But it is an outrage, a shame and a disgrace, a sin of the most deadly sort against our pupils that these methods be longer retained.

How much Latin or Greek can you read without lexicon or grammar? Be honest now! How many people do you know who can read these languages to amount to much without these helps? How many teachers of these languages do you know who do not have to prepare for the work of each such lesson in advance, by the use of lexicon or grammar? More than that, how many teachers do you know who, when they set themselves to mark up a set of examination papers, do not fortify themselves with lexicon and grammar, to prove whether the work is correct? I have seen this done scores of times. So have you. I have done the thing myself. So have you. And we did no wrong in using these books, either. Our only wrong was in not permitting our pupils to do as we did.

Shall we, then, abolish college entrance examinations and corresponding work in our public schools? By no means. All that needs to be done is simply to abolish the antiquated and wholly useless method that is now in vogue, and, in its place, use a method that is rational, and in accordance with modern means and appliances. That is, since we live in an age of books, when everybody has them and can have them continually, when there is no need whatever of burdening the memory with data as there used to be — since all these things are



so, let us mend our examination ways and test our pupils as to *how well they can use books*, rather than how perfectly (or imperfectly) they can repeat what is in them. That will remedy the whole difficulty, and will remove all the trouble on that score, and will lift a load from the backs of our pupils in comparison of which mountains are but pebbles.

And what a change this will make in the bookwork of our schoolrooms. Think of geography, and history, and literature, when taught by this method. Who would not gladly undertake these studies, on such a basis as is here proposed? What boy or girl did we ever know who did not respond to the reading of history, or of geography, full of live data—stories of men, things, and places that had life in them, and that it was a delight to know about? See how we have all learned about the Philippines, and Russia, and Japan, in the last few years, from what we have read out of the newspapers and magazines! We do not remember it all. Surely not. We could not pass a written examination upon it. But we remember all that is needful to be remembered, and what we forget we can “look up,” and that is enough.

Under this new order of things, we will educate all our pupils by methods that they will use when they come into the practical affairs of life. Then, if we wish to test a boy's proficiency in history, we will give him an historical subject to investigate, put the proper books into his hands, and see what comes of it. The same in Latin, or Greek, or philosophy, or mathematics. This is what the boy will come to in the work of life, and this work that we give him will be excellent practice for him while he is learning how to do things; and all

the children of all the people can learn to do things this way, each after his own plan.

Is a lawyer asked to pass upon a case? His ability to do this is by no means confined to his memory. He has his own library, and that of his fellows in his profession, to refer to. The same is true of the physician, the preacher, the teacher, and of all book-professional men and women. It is equally true of the craftsman, and of all workers in whose callings the records to be found in books are of use. Likewise in all the business world, the use of books, their handling, consulting, and studying—these are all factors of chief importance. The banker relies on his books and not on his memory—that is, if he is a good banker. So does the merchant, and the manufacturer, and even the farmer is coming to work in the same way.

So, what our children need, so far as books are concerned, is to be taught how to use them. This is especially true of all and everything on the side of literature, and of literary culture and training. I saw a class in literature, so called, the other day, where the work consisted of the pupils' standing and telling, from memory, the names of authors, when they were born, where they were born, how long they lived, what books they wrote, when they died, where they died, and where they were buried. At the end of each month they are required to pass a written examination on what they have learned! I have before me, as I write, a set of college entrance examinations for the year 1910, in which this sort of work in literature is called for, *and required!* Indeed, a teacher who taught literature in the public schools by this method told me that she was *compelled* to do as she did in order to fit her pupils to



pass college entrance examinations. She said the colleges with which their school was affiliated all required such work. And there you are again!

What can, or does, such study of literature amount to? Absolutely nothing. Yes, often worse than nothing. For the boredom of it, and the agony that it inflicts upon the pupil, create a hatred of literature that is often never overcome. Such a method is dead, and should be buried. It is a stench in the nostrils of any true lover of literature, or of any live teacher of the subject.

Would I know the literary standing of an individual? Let him bring to me any book he has read, I care not whether I have ever seen or heard of the book or of its author before, and read to me what he counts of most worth in the volume, and I can very soon judge of his literary accomplishments and standing. So can you. So can any one who is fair-minded, and open to evidence that is worth while. There need be no trouble in this sort of examination work. It can be well and faithfully done, with full justice to all parties concerned.

And the best of it is that such a method will demonstrate what it is set to prove. It will also free our pupils from a slavery that has long held them in bondage. Furthermore, it will entirely remove all temptation to cheat in examination, a practice that has done more to undermine the morals of students, in recent years, than any other one source of evil that can be named or imagined. It will make study a delight, and the proof of one's attainments a test to be desired rather than a trial to be shunned. The time it will save our students and teachers will make room for the work that our schools must do, for manual training and domestic economy, for work in many practical things



which the schools need, and which we now "have no time for"; it will usher in a new day in our school world, one that will bring joy to the hearts of teachers, pupils, and parents, and positive profit to them all.

Such methods of study and of examinations as I have outlined will accommodate themselves to the way we are, every one of us, and to the way everybody else is, and everything else is. And so we will be happy and get on. As heaven is to the other place, so will the conditions of our pupils then be to the fix they are now in.

Time was when the word "scholar" meant a walking dictionary and an aut cyclopedia, and all the methods and paraphernalia of the schools were brought into play to effect such a result. As language and the volume of things known were in those days, all these things might be packed into one head and the man be none the worse for it. But as things are now, an effort to produce such a result is fatal to the victims. There are too many words now, and knowledge has too vast a reach, to be compressed any longer into any one single head. Besides, what's the use? Dictionaries are so cheap. The millions can have cyclopedias now; and things are so much easier to get at, so much more reliable withal, so much more liable to keep in any climate, when preserved for use in this way.

Even China has largely abandoned her memory-test examinations for political preferment, and the whole system has been abolished by imperial edict in Japan. These nations have used these methods for centuries in their educational work, but they have now come to see that, in the light of modern means and methods, they are of little or no account. So they have marked them off their educational maps. Wise people, they.

The simple truth is, that these memory-test examination methods must be abolished in this country also — dropped, all along the line. They are now held in place in our public schools almost solely because the colleges require that they be kept there, and that is not a good and sufficient reason for their being longer endured.

All that the colleges have right to ask of a candidate for admission to their doors is that he prove that he is fitted and able to do the work that they require. This can be learned by an examination of how well the candidate can use books, and do things, far better than by how well he can merely repeat what is in books. And it will be that way, some day.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SHOOTING TO HIT

Purposeful *vs.* Purposeless Study—A "Pullman" Story—The Tragedy of it all—Why the Aimless Methods are bad in a Democracy—The "All Around" Man Valueless in Modern Life—"One Bird at a Shot"—Lowell's Definition of a University.

ANOTHER change that will come with this new order of things in our schools will be the practice, on the part of our pupils, of studying for some definite purpose in life, rather than merely "to get an education" and then "wait for something to turn up." There is no one item in the educational work of the young people of to-day which leads to more disastrous results than the aimless methods of study which are now so generally practiced. The change that is needed will perhaps affect more largely the work done in our colleges and universities than in our public schools, but it will have to be largely introduced, even in the more elementary work of all our children.

I have said that such aimless study, this idea of merely getting a good education, results badly; and I wish to emphasize that statement. That it is true, no one who is familiar with the facts will deny. That anything can be done about it, most people either doubt or refuse to consider.

I have no word to say against scholastic work in our public schools, or in our colleges and universities, provided such work be done with some definite end in view.



But to pursue any course of study just for the sake of studying something, just to become "cultured," just to get a good education—this is as dangerous as it is foolish, unless one has money enough so that he can, for the most part, live without work. You may not have thought it that way, but if you will stop to consider the facts in the case, you will find them as I have just stated.

I cannot illustrate the situation better than by giving a case that came under my observation a few months ago. A prominent merchant in this country told me the story as we were riding together in a Pullman, and I will repeat it as he gave it to me. We had been talking about this matter of aimless work in school, and he finally said:—

"You are right, Mr. Smith. It is a sin before God for a boy to go through college without a definite purpose in life, a positive something which he aims to hit—either for him to do this for himself, or for his parents to permit him to do so. And I'll tell you how I know what I am talking about." He then went on, as follows:

"I have two boys. The older one is now thirty-seven. He is married, has a good wife and four children that will average well with children as they go, which is as moderate a way of saying it as ought to be expected from a grandfather! He is a recognized factor in our city affairs, has his place in our church; and, not to boast, is a son that a father may well rejoice in, not to say be a bit proud of. He is really the head of our business house, though I am nominally to the fore. I have just been East buying goods, for I have some good stuff in me yet, if I am past seventy; but if anything should happen to me, my son could carry on the busi-

ness with perfect success. He knows the details of our trade from top to bottom, and is thoroughly master of the situation. We have no tremendous concern," he added modestly; "but we manage to turn over three or four million dollars a year, take it one year with another. I began the business in a small way as a young man, and it has grown to what it now is.

"Now this older boy of mine never took to books much. But he was our firstborn, and his mother was very anxious that he should have a good education, one very much better than mine, for I never had an opportunity to go to school very much when I was young. So we kept the boy in school, one way or another, till he finished the high school course, in a way. It was a kind of a 'scratch,' but they finally let him graduate. Then his mother wanted him to go to college. But the boy rebelled. He said he would be willing to do almost anything for his mother (he was a good boy), but that what she asked was too much. He said that he wanted to go into the store.

"Well, his mother and I talked it over, and she cried about it some, but we finally concluded that we'd do as the boy wished; and so he went into the store. I started him at three dollars a week. He was seventeen years old, and he had graduated from the high school; but three dollars a week was all he could earn, to start on; and in business it is what one can earn, and not what diploma he has, that counts.

"That was twenty years ago, and during those years the boy has grown up through the business till he is now, practically, the head of the house. He is able to take care of himself and his family, he is a good citizen, and a respected and worthy part of the community he



lives in. That is, it seems to me he is a success, a man whose life is really worth while."

Here the narrator paused a minute, looked out of the car window thoughtfully for a brief space, and then went on:—

"Now I have another boy, four years younger than the one I have just told you about. He is naturally just as good a boy as his brother, and is very much brighter in books. He always led his classes, and was greatly loved and admired by his teachers and his fellow students.

"He graduated from the high school at seventeen; and then, because he wanted to go to college, his mother and I were only too glad to have him do so. So we sent him to Yale for four years, where he made a record that was as good as he had made in school at home. He took a complete classical course, studied everything that a cultured gentleman ought to study, and came through just that, just a cultured gentleman. He didn't try to fit himself for anything in particular—just aimed to get a first-class education, as it is generally counted, and he got it.

"When he got through at Yale, he wanted to do some post-graduate work across the water—nothing definite, but only in the line of general culture, which he was very fond of. We could afford to do this for him; for, though I am not a rich man, yet I had enough to let the boy do as he liked about his education. So he spent two years in Germany and France, studying there; and then, to give him all that could be had, I paid his expenses for two years of travel, during which he visited the principal countries and cities of the world.

"And then he came home! He was a handsome fellow, twenty-five years old, cultured, refined, polished;



a gentleman and a scholar in the full sense of those words. He was a man of good habits, had kept himself clean and decent on the moral side of his life, in a word he was an 'ideal gentleman.'

"That's what he was in the eyes of the world. But, as a matter of fact, he was as helpless a mortal, so far as earning a living (at least such a living as he had always had, such a one as I had given him, and as he was thoroughly used to) was concerned, as he was when he was a boy in knickerbockers! He simply couldn't do anything; and the worst of it was, he didn't want to do anything. That is, anything that meant work for pay. As a matter of fact, there was little or nothing that he could do, unless it was to teach; and he couldn't earn money enough at that to keep him in neckties — not the kind of neckties he had been used to wearing.

"And so the question finally came up what to do with him. We tried him in the store, but it was no good. He didn't know a thing about the business, and he was too old and too proud to learn. He couldn't start in on three dollars a week, and work his way up. He had got away past such a possibility; and yet, practically, that is about the only way a business like ours can be learned, so as to be a master of it. In our business (yes, in any business), the *details* have to be mastered, if its pursuit is made a success. And this he simply could not learn; nor can any one do this, situated as he was, and that is the terribly hard thing about it.

"You see, his habits of life were none of them based on business principles. He loved to sleep late in the morning, and he wanted to have my coachman bring him down to the store whenever he got ready to come. Sometimes he would get down by eight, and sometimes

not till eleven. We put him on the correspondence, but it was a failure. He could write an article for a magazine, or a thesis for a degree; but he couldn't write a business letter, one that would be of value in our business. He hadn't the knowledge of details that was required for writing such a letter. We tried him as a salesman on the road, but he was a failure, everywhere.

"And as for entering a profession, — as the law, or medicine, or the pulpit, at his time of life, he had no more show there than he had in our business. He was behind in the procession in everything but being a cultured gentleman; and there he was only fitted to be taken care of by somebody else, to have some one else pay the bills. There was nothing that he could do that would bring him twenty dollars a week. No one could afford to pay him even so much, for he couldn't earn it at anything that he could turn his hand to.

"He is now thirty-three years old, right in the prime of his young manhood. He isn't married, and I doubt if he ever will be. I'd be glad to have him marry, and to settle enough on him to take care of him in a modest way. But he is too proud for that. And I couldn't give him an allowance which would meet the requirements of himself and such a woman as he would want to marry, if he married at all.

"And so, Mr. Smith, there is only one word that will describe the condition of this son of mine, to-day, and that is the terrible word 'failure!' That is the saddest word I know anything about, especially when it describes the condition of a capable young life."

There were tears in the old man's eyes as he said this. And then we both looked out of the car window



for a long time, and said nothing. But after awhile he went on:—

“And so I say that if I had a score of boys, I would never permit another one of them to get a purposeless education. This tragedy in our boy’s life is the result of our own false notions. I don’t know that we are to blame, or that he is to blame; but we are all suffering from a great mistake, and what the end is to be, God only knows.”

Now this is no “made-up story,” good people. It is “the real thing”; and you know its duplicates, or perhaps scores of just such cases. And isn’t it tragedy of the “most deepest dye”? Such cases are seen everywhere, and their number is on the increase daily. Furthermore, it is as true of young women as it is of young men. And the pathos of it is immeasurable!

Of course, it is easy to see that all this is but another relic of other days. These young people, who do as I have described, are only following in the ways of the sons and daughters of the nobility across the water, of young people who, according to the code, are born to be taken care of; who never work, nor need to think of earning their own living. That is the way of monarchy, and under such a régime it doubtless has its place. But the pity of such ways among the common people of a democracy—there are no words that can describe the wrong of such condition. And yet every boy and girl that our schools send out purposeless, they send out to the probability of such a fate as I have described. Every parent who permits a son or a daughter to lead such an aimless life in school work is laying up wrath against a day of doom.

Now I do not think that every boy or girl can say,



for sure, what he or she should do for a living when they are grown up. Nor do I think that parents can settle this for them, with positive accuracy, every time; nor that teachers can determine the matter without mistake. But I do believe that, in the cases of nearly all children, somewhere between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, these three parties together, the pupil, the parent, and the teacher—that this combination can settle, with reasonable definiteness, what work in life each pupil is best suited to perform. In many cases (I could almost say in most) this could be determined much earlier in the life of the child. Personally, I know scores of children who are not yet in their teens, who show such unmistakable signs of their bent of mind, their likes and dislikes, their longages and shortages, that it would be perfectly safe to predict what work in life they will best succeed in. And my experience is yours, I am sure.

And then, having chosen the line of life work for a child, there can no longer be any doubt that the wise thing to do is to train him or her along that particular line, to the best advantage possible.

And again I say, there is no need of fear that by doing this we shall make one-sided men and women. Or, if it be admitted that there is such a danger, is it not true that a one-sided man or woman is far preferable to one who has so many sides that none of them are of any account in making a living?

The fact is, the day of the all-round man has forever passed. In the days of my father, no further back than that, it was possible for one mind to compass a very large part of the full sum of knowledge that was then available. But no one can do that now; and the man who

tries to do it, or the school that tries to have him do it, will end in failure.

When I was a boy I went out hunting prairie chickens. There were thousands of them in the fields in those days. I was with an old hunter, and the first covey of birds that we flushed, I up with my gun, shut my eyes, and blazed away at the flock. And I never touched a feather! After I had done that a few times, the old man said to me, "That's no way to shoot chickens, my boy! When the flock rises, I don't care if there's a million of 'em, just pick out one bird out of the lot, and bring your gun up till you can see that bird right over the top of your gun-barrel, and then shoot, and that bird is your meat!"

And it was so.

Some day we shall train our boys and girls in our public schools, and in our colleges and universities, to *shoot to hit*, leading them to see that even one bird at a time is a great deal better than simply a loud report with nothing but noise to show for it, while some one else pays the bills!

But we are more to be pitied than blamed for our wrong-goings in this matter. We have been so long drilled to think that such is the only and best way; and it has for so long been counted as so "respectable." As recent an authority as James Russell Lowell has said that "a university is a place where nothing useful should be taught." Lowell was a great man, in many ways, but he was "short" in his ideas as to the true purpose of educative work, for the people of a democracy who have to earn a living and hoe their own rows.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### JUST A LITTLE ABOUT TEACHERS

Personal Relations of Teachers and Pupils — Palmer's "New Education" — Public Schools not Charitable Institutions — Poverty no Just Claim for Position of Teacher — Letter regarding "Young Graduates" and "Old Teachers" — Newness of Work required by Modern Educational Demands makes it difficult to get Efficient Teachers — Testimony of Superintendent on this Issue — Special Pedagogical Training, all along the Line, needful — How Engineers are made — Railroad and School Methods compared — Inefficiency of Mere Academic Culture for Technical School Room Work — Where, and by what Teachers, Poorest Pedagogical Work is now done — Uniform State Examinations of Teachers — A Dehumanized Method — The Only Way to learn how to Teach — Normal Schools — Politics, Religion, and Teachers.

THE doing of such work as has been outlined in the previous chapter will necessitate the closest personal relations between pupils and teachers, during the whole of the child's school life. This is at variance with the ways of college and university life, especially in the larger institutions of this sort. In the smaller colleges things are better in this respect, and that is one item in favor of a small college. But in our public schools the principle of the personal interest of the teachers in all their pupils should extend to the farthest boundary. Only such teachers should be permitted in these schools as love the work, and also *love the pupils* they work for and with. It may be a long time till then, but our schools are young yet, and they are arriving.

In that sterling book of his, "The New Education,"



Professor A. M. Palmer, of Harvard, has told how things ought to be in this respect, and some day the ways he has outlined will be realized.

To reach such an attainment, one of the first removes that must be made from current ways will be getting rid of the idea that our public schools are charitable institutions, and so that it is a part of their business to make places for teachers who "need the money." That these schools are such institutions is a deep-seated belief which is very largely held by the rank and file of our people at present, and hence it will be very slow in its abatement. None the less, it must pass with other inherited things that are no longer of use.

That this idea is so prevalent is no wonder, for the public schools grew out of an order of things in which charity was the chief factor. But that condition no longer obtains. The simple truth is that, since the schools have become "common," since they are now a part of the state's way of doing the best it can to insure a constituency of good citizens; since this is now the mission and status of the schools, they have become the most practical kind of a business proposition. Their business is to make good citizens, first-class members of the body politic, which is only another phrase for good men and women. And the making of good men and women out of children does not necessitate, as a factor, the taking care of a lot of men and women by paying them to do work which they are wholly unfit for, by employing as teachers those whose chief claim for the place is their poverty!

It may be necessary for the state to care for such poverty-stricken people, to feed and clothe them; but it has no right to try to shirk such provision for want

or misfortune by foisting these incompetents upon the public schools in the guise of teachers, and so, not only forcing people to support them in that way, but compelling the children to suffer from their inability. I would not be harsh in saying this, yet it is a word that needs to be said, and to be said out loud — very loud.

Because it may seem to some of my readers that I have overestimated the way people feel about our schools in the matter and the belief they have that they should be used for the benefit of those who "need the money," I insert just here a letter that I took from a local newspaper of a moderate-sized city, a few days ago, as follows:—

"I think it is about time the old teachers stepped out and gave the young graduates that are turned out of our high school every year a chance. I think it would be a good plan to change teachers, as well as school inspectors, more often. Let them know there are other ladies that can teach those rooms, and some need the money and position worse than the present teachers in some cases I am sure."

And say not in your hearts that the writer of this letter is a sinner above all others. I tell you nay, but the case is common, more's the pity. But it must pass with the rest of our bad inheritances, and it will do so in due time. Meanwhile, let's help it to go.

Another change that presents exceeding difficulties is the training of teachers so that they shall be well fitted to do the new work that is required to be done in our public schools. This is especially the case in the manual training and domestic economy lines of school work. Here, the ways are all so new that trouble crops out and creeps in, in all attempts to do what is so needful



to be done. What are the best things to be done in these two lines of school work, and how shall the work proposed be accomplished? These and other equally important questions crowd to the front wherever such work has been attempted.

It is only a short time since a superintendent of one of our leading cities said to me: "I fear that our whole effort in manual training and domestic economy will fail, because I cannot get teachers who can do what it seems to me ought to be done." He went on to say further: "I confess I don't know myself what ought to be done, either in courses of study or in carrying them out if once they are determined upon. I have never had any experience in such lines of work, and so I know next to nothing about it. In our shop, I first got a man for a teacher who had had training in the theory of such work. He was a good man, viewed from that standpoint; but when he came to actually handling tools, to really doing the things he talked about, and tried to teach, here he fell down, miserably! Then I got a practical mechanic, and put him in charge. He could use tools, but he knew nothing of teaching, and the boys ran over him, and so his work was a failure."

It was an honest confession, and it stated the situation as it is to-day, to a great extent, all over the country, so far as this kind of work in our schools is concerned. Nor will the situation get very much better right away. It is a long road we shall have to travel in this respect, but we shall cover the ground as the years go by.

Some of our state universities and polytechnic schools are beginning to give special attention to the development of directive courses of study and practice in these fields, and to the training of men and women to



teach the work which they outline. But better than this, in a good many ways, our public schools will gradually work these problems out for themselves. Always, when the need comes, men and women appear who are equal to the doing of the task required. Gradually, teachers will arise who will point out the ways that can be traveled successfully. No one teacher will do all this, but here one, and there another, will discover and work out the things that ought to be done, to a degree, and then will reveal to others what they have found out, and so the work will proceed. Just here comes in the most excellent directive work that some manual training and domestic economy magazines are now giving to teachers and the public.

But, more than all this, there is destined to be a great advance, in the not distant future, in the way we train our teachers to teach. The calling will become more and more a profession, which no one will be permitted to enter who has not received adequate training, and who has not had the experience that is essential to the successful doing of the work required. This principle obtains in almost every other trade or profession that can be named. The reason it is not insisted upon in the matter of teaching is that, as yet, the pedagogical side of the situation is but very poorly understood and comprehended by the people as they go — by the patrons of the schools. Here is the crux of the whole situation, the lack of understanding on the part of the public in general, and of parents in particular, as to what real teaching is.

Because people get killed on railroads through the incompetence of engineers, we insist that the men who handle locomotives shall have special training and

experience before they are given charge of an engine on the road. And this must be genuine training and actual experience, too. It must be something more than going through the motions of engineering, of studying the theory of air brakes and time-tables. A man must serve a seven years' apprenticeship in doing the subordinate work that leads up to the place of engineer, before he is given entire control of an engine doing actual work on a road.

Let me push this comparison a little farther. There are most excellent schools in this country for the training of locomotive engineers. These schools have a most comprehensive curriculum, which includes four years of work in shops and on engines, and which is just as near the real thing as it is possible to attain to without the real thing itself. Such schools have locomotives so mounted that they can go through all the motions of engines in actual use on the road. These locomotives can be made to run at any speed that is possible for any ordinary engine. They can be so manipulated that they will put forth the energy required to draw any kind of a train or any number of cars, such as they would ever be called on to handle in the regular work on the road. They are regularly equipped with air brakes, both for themselves and for the train they are supposed to be handling. In a word, each such outfit is a perfect suppositional engine and train, and its handling is designed to include all the exigencies that would arise in actual railroading.

The students have four years of training in the work of building engines, taking them apart and putting them together, repairing them, and running them under all sorts of supposed conditions. They learn all about air



brakes, and all the paraphernalia of cars, both freight and passenger. They study all the theories regarding these things, and have the advantage of the best literature and the ablest teachers that the world affords on all these lines. Four years of this work they have, and it is good, honest, substantial, and solid work, too.

Now, would it not seem that young men, so trained, would be well fitted to go right to work and successfully handle a locomotive on a railroad? Theoretically, it appears so, surely. And yet, note the facts in the case. Not one of the graduates from such a school, not from the best of them (and there are several most excellent schools of this kind in the country), not one graduate from the best of them all, not even the leader in his class, could get a position, even as engineer on a switch engine, on any standard railroad in the United States, or elsewhere, on the strength of his credentials and his diploma alone, or because of the work he had done in such schools. To the uninitiated, that may seem strange and perhaps hard; but it is a fact that inquiry will readily verify.

Now why is all this? Simply because the managers of railroads are practical, hard-headed business men, whom experience has taught that it is not safe to put men who are only *theoretically* trained into actual work. These merely school-bred men all lack the one thing needful, namely, actual experience with the real thing; and this can only be obtained by contact with the real thing. That is the situation.

How, then, do these graduates from locomotive engineering ever get into the places they have been educated to fill? Are such schools a failure, and does the long, hard work done in them count for nothing? Here



is the rest of the story : When these graduates leave school and seek places on the road, they are set to work at the foot of the ladder, and from there they are obliged to work their way up. They are given trial jobs of the simplest sorts, and thus they are tested to prove what manner of men they are. In a word, they are examined by actual tests, not by mere memory grinds, and are proved by what they can do, and not by what they can write on paper.

Such graduates are put to work wiping the dirt and oil from engines in the roundhouse, to start on ! If they do this work well, and prove themselves masters of it, they are promoted to more difficult tasks, and so they mount the ladder of their chosen calling. As a rule, it takes about three years for such a graduate to get an engine that he can have entire charge of, in actual service on the road. For the man who starts out to get such a place without this special school-training in a school for locomotive engineering, it takes seven years to secure such a position. And so the men are comparatively even at the end of the first seven years. After that, I am told, the odds are largely in favor of the school-trained man ; though that is neither here nor there, so far as this discussion is concerned. I only mention it to show that this sort of school work does pay, and that it is for the best in the long run.

But the point I want to make is this : That, whereas, after a man has had these four long years of very nearly practical work in training to be an engineer, and even then is not permitted to take charge of an engine until he has had three years more of actual experience on the road — whereas all this is so, yet, in school work, we will take a graduate from almost anywhere between a

grammar school and a university course, and put him in full charge of a roomful of boys and girls, and expect him to do successful work as a teacher, even if he has never actually taught a single day! Was ever anything more preposterously foolish or irrational, not to say positively insane?

Because, as a matter of fact, successfully running an engine is a simple attainment when compared with successfully teaching a school. This is not generally reckoned to be the case, but it is so, all the same. And the reason for this misunderstanding, on the part of the public in general, and of parents in particular, lies in the fact that teaching blunders are not as palpable as engineering mistakes and errors are. If an engineer is incompetent and fails to do his duty, tangible property is destroyed or lives are lost, and these are things that everybody can see and know about, and that everybody knows the value of. But if a teacher blunders, and as a result boys and girls drop out of school and so fail to get what they ought to have, for lack of which they will suffer all their lives — when this happens, it is a personal or private affair; very few know anything about it, and still fewer care anything about it, anyway, and so the matter passes unnoticed year after year.

But, oh, the truth about these blunders of teachers who so wreck the children's lives, and who (more's the pity) have no idea of what ruin they are causing or permitting! This part of the story is simply untellable. Yet, even here, no one is really to blame. We haven't, any of us, meant to be so bad, to really do wrong. But we have been bad, and we are doing wrong every time we permit a teacher to take a place in our schoolrooms *merely on academic credentials*. The ordinary test of



teaching ability that is now made by mere written examinations of the candidates is practically of little or no value whatever in determining the real worth of the individual in actual schoolroom work. This is just as true of state examination tests as it is of county superintendents' tests, or of city superintendents' tests. The written work done by such candidates no more proves their ability to teach than merely written tests of an engineer would prove his ability to successfully handle an engine, in actual work on the road. Nay, it does not nearly as much demonstrate the thing which it is set to prove, in the first case, as it would in the last, because, successful teaching is as much more subtle and difficult a task than engineering, as the mind of a child is more complicated and difficult of handling than is a mass of iron and steel.

And yet, as things are now, a diploma of almost any kind, surely one granted by a college or a normal school, is almost a sesame open to a position as teacher in our public schools. Such a document is, by itself, no positive evidence whatever of ability to teach children successfully. The knowledge that the diploma vouches for may be essential to successful schoolroom work, but the mere possession of this knowledge is no proof of ability to teach. Indeed, the poorest work I have ever seen done in our public schools has been at the hands of college graduates who were teaching in grammar grades, and who had no experience in teaching. I have seen work done by such as these that would break your heart!

There are thousands of schoolrooms in this country the work of which will prove the truth of the statement just made. The men and women in charge of very many of these schoolrooms are book educated and memory



trained sufficiently for their places; but they know very little or nothing about teaching. The thing they chiefly know how to do is to assign pages to be memorized, and to stand pupils up and see if they can repeat what they have been asked to learn! Besides this, they must be able to "keep order" and "not allow whispering," and to see to it that the pupils march out and in well. In how many of our public schools is this and the like of this called good teaching? You answer.

Bearing upon which, I have recently seen the practical work of an attempt that is now making, in some states, of having a State Board of Examination pass upon the qualifications of all the teachers of that state. These examiners issue questions for the examinations, and send them to the county superintendents, who submit them to the candidates for teaching. The candidates write answers to the questions submitted, and their papers are sent to the State Board, to "mark" and pass upon. No names are attached to the papers (they are only numbered to identify them) and the examiners do not even know, when passing upon a given paper, whether it was written by a man or woman! And from such absolutely dehumanized, impersonal data the examiners are supposed to be able to determine whether or not the candidates they pass upon are fitted to teach! What railroad would remain solvent for one year if it examined its engineers in this way? What does your common sense tell you about it?

Yet I would not too much blame this attempt at doing the right thing. For such an attempt it is. There were evils under the system which it was set to better; but they must have been very bad if this way will mend them. The primary factor in good teaching is the

personality of the teacher, and this is left at the zero point by such a method of judging of pedagogic qualifications. This system of state examinations, as I saw it exploited, was well and faithfully done by good men and women, but I cannot believe that any great good will ever come of it.

The way to learn how to teach is to teach, as the way to learn how to run an engine is to run an engine. But neither can be done successfully out of hand, or without long practice under competent instruction. I would not want to say that no person should ever be permitted to teach who had not been especially trained for the profession, any more than I would want to say that no person should ever be permitted to run an engine until he had had seven years of preliminary work. There are geniuses in all callings. I know good teachers who have had but very little training outside of their own experience. I know first-class engineers who have come to their own in the same way. But these are all exceptions. They are not the kind to go by, for the rank and file of us. As a rule, it takes years of special training under first-class direction and instruction to make a good teacher, just as it takes similar experience and method to make a good engineer.

Our normal schools and our pedagogical classes in colleges and universities have already done a great deal in the way of training teachers to teach; but if the real truth be told, even these have as yet done but partially what needs to be done much more thoroughly. The reason for making this statement is the fact that little of their work is the real thing. Those who do it are doing suppositional work. Their work corresponds almost exactly with the training given to engineers by



their training schools. And such graduates all need to serve a practical apprenticeship in actual schoolroom work done under competent supervision, before they are given full control of a roomful of children, or, especially, before they are put in command of a corps of teachers!

And yet, how common a thing it is for a man or woman who has never taught a day, to be given even the position of principal or superintendent of schools, solely because he or she has graduated from some scholastic institution! A similar system pursued in railroad-ing would very shortly ruin any road that tried the experiment. That it has served our schools no worse is a proof of how much abuse a well-grounded institution can stand and not go to the wall.

Some day we shall insist on practical experience in teaching on the part of every applicant for an independent position in our schools; and, further, we shall examine all candidates for such positions, not merely on their scholastic attainments, and that in an impersonal way, but by personal inspection, by competent judges, of the actual schoolroom work that the applicants can do. That will be an examination which worthy teachers will never think of shrinking from, but which, on the contrary, they will be proud to undergo — as proud as a competent engineer always is to demonstrate to the superintendent how skillfully he can handle an engine. In those days, candidates for teacher's certificate, either county or state, will not wear their lives away memorizing cyclopedias, and in other ways making themselves ready to answer, on the instant, any one of a thousand and one questions that really have no relation whatever to teaching school.



I would not be pessimistic or faultfinding for its own sake; and every honest observer of our schools knows, from the observations I have made, that I am neither. As I have already intimated, the whole situation is far more our misfortune than our fault, and now that we are coming to understand the real conditions in the premises, we are setting about making them what they should be.

Of course, a successful settling of this difficulty means ever so many more things than I can discuss here. It takes in all the issues of permanency in the profession, salaries, tenure of place, and scores of other things, none of which can be settled in a day, or in many days. But the fact that we are coming to comprehend the truth that teaching is a profession as engineering is a calling; that the mere possession of a memory-knowledge of what is in books is no criterion for successful training of boys and girls in a schoolroom; that our schools are not for the support of teachers whose chief claim for place is the fact that they are without visible means of support; that no place in a schoolroom is to be used for payment of any political, or social, or denominational debt, — the fact that at least some people are coming to see these things as they are is a hopeful sign, and all the results towards which this sign points will come in due time.

Meantime, let us all do what we can to secure as good results as we can, while we wait.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE PARENTAL FACTOR

Difficulties of this Phase of the Problem — "Fixed Ideas" of Parents — Parental Plans for Career of Unborn Progeny — Heredity — Darwin, Burbank, Shaw — Persistence of an Exploded Theory — An Instance in point — Musical Father and his Daughter — The Artist in Color but not in Tone — God's Way and Man's Way — The "Conventional" and the "Rivalry" Factors — Unfairness and Wrong of Such Practices — Mrs. Grundy as a Trouble-maker just here — The Value of Struggle well understood and well directed — The Real Hero.

THERE are two chief items in the count in considering parents as they stand related to an educational problem that includes all the children of all the people. The first is the difficulty in getting parents to realize, or at least acknowledge, the way their children are; and the second is the still greater task of inducing them to do what ought to be done under the circumstances.

For instance, in the first place it is a matter of common knowledge that almost all fathers and mothers have preconceived ideas as to what they wish their children to be when they are grown up. This is often not a general and indefinite affair, but is frequently very specific and direct. Not infrequently these ideas take positive shape before their child is born, and there is a very prevalent notion that such prenatal desires and purposes, on the part of parents, have a highly potent influence on determining the character and bent of mind of their children. There are mothers, in untellable

numbers, who have dedicated their sons to the ministry months before they knew whether their prospective offspring was to be a boy or girl. This is only one of thousands of similar instances, though probably the most numerous of all the train, for reasons that I cannot go into here. Kings and queens plan for and speculate upon the character and career of a prospective heir to the throne who shall come from their loins, and beggars are anxious that their progeny shall be more expert at winning pennies from the susceptible than they themselves have been.

And so multitudes of children that come into this world are handicapped, from the day of their birth, by cut-and-dried plans for their future development. Parents have notions as to what they wish their children to do, or to become, and in pursuance of these notions they gauge their actions and force their children into ways that tally with what they wish the outcome to be.

In doing this they seldom have any regard for the way their children are, for their natural aptitude of mind, and for the possibilities that are within their reach. With their hopes and their baseless faith rooted in the popular educational ideas that I have noted in previous chapters, namely, that any child can be or do anything that its parents wish it to be or to do (for that is practically the way they hold the matter in mind — their translation of such educational dogma), they proceed to try to fashion the child according to their pre-determined plans. Sometimes this brings results that are in accordance with the purpose that underlies it. Occasionally a startling tally is made in this way. But, for the most part, those who travel this road have a time of it.



And this leads me naturally to the matter of heredity, concerning which I have space for only a word. The honest truth is, we know next to nothing about the transmission of traits from parents to offspring in the human family. We know that it is common for children to resemble their fathers and mothers in physical appearance, to a greater or less extent. There are usually "family features" that are not hard to detect. It is also true that there are some mental characteristics that are occasionally to be noted in given families, sometimes for several successive generations. But when this has been said, the reliable testimony in the case is all in. All beyond that is mere guesswork, and cannot be counted on in the least. Such are the facts.

I know all about the theories in the premises; but you and I know, all parents know, that, so far as our own experience goes, these theories are not based on facts. It is the universal experience that counts; and that all goes to show that, as yet, we know very little about breeding as it pertains to the human family. We have it down to quite definite lines among the animals below us, and in the vegetable kingdom the results obtainable are brought within the limits of the positively known. Mr. Darwin has shown the way as it pertains to the first, and Mr. Burbank has revealed the wonders regarding what can be done in the second. But when it comes to us and ours, neither of these authorities can do more than speculate. You and I can do that. Bernard Shaw summed the whole matter up when he wrote, "The bubble of heredity has been pricked."

And yet, in the face of these facts, fathers and mothers will continue to treat their children in accordance with the theories that their experience tells them

are false, rather than in harmony with what their common sense shows them is true. They will persist in trying to fashion the lives and characters of their offspring along the lines of their own preconceived notions (which are based on what their children ought to be, according to the theories of a groundless hereditary philosophy), to the utter neglect of what they know, in their inmost souls, their children ought to do. Let me note a concrete case which will clearly illustrate the point.

I know a man who is a fine musician. He can sing anything he can see, he can play any musical instrument he can get his hands on. Now it would be supposed, according to the theoretical laws of heredity, that this man's progeny would be musically strong. He has one daughter, and she can hardly tell one tone from another. And there you are. I'll note more of this case farther on, but this much of it is all I care for just here.

Nor is this nearly so rare a case as some, especially heredity theorists, would have us think. All parents know that the same thing is true with their own children, to a greater or less degree. It is by no means music, in all cases; but, somewhere, on some lines, the children will be found to vary largely from their progenitors; and it is a rare thing for pronounced qualities to be transmitted from parent to child. And yet it is almost a rule that parents are ambitious to have their children excel along lines on which they are themselves particularly strong.

How these things can be, why these variations between parents and children, is a great question for which no wholly satisfactory answer has yet been found.



There are many guesses, but the best of them satisfy at only a few points. The Theosophists come as near as any I know anything about in answering the riddle, but even these can only surmise, and hint at possibilities. They tell how it may be, and some of the things they say are exceedingly suggestive. But what they know for sure is like all the rest, — nil!

So the first point to be gained in the new order of things is for parents to be willing to see their children as they really are, to fairly measure their natural aptitudes and possibilities, regardless of theories as to what they should have been if heredity were what it is claimed to be, and then to plan for the future of their offspring accordingly. And yet these are the things that it is almost impossible to get done.

To revert to the case that I partly told of a few paragraphs back. This father thought that because he was musical his daughter should be. And when he found that she was not, that fact made no difference in the plans he laid for her education, nor for the means he undertook to carry out those plans. According to the educational theories he had been reared in (the common theories of his time, and largely of "this present now"), he could make a fine musician out of his child, anyhow. She was an exceedingly bright child, and her mental capabilities seemed to her father to be sufficient to make a success of anything she might undertake. She could read at three years of age, and showed mental abilities far beyond the average child from her earliest infancy. With this equipment, the father felt sure he could realize his heart's desire regarding his daughter, and he proceeded to work out his plans accordingly.

He bought the best piano that could be had, and he



procured the best teacher that money could hire. And he put the piano, the teacher, and the girl together, and kept them together for months and years. And the girl tried her best to do what her father wanted her to do, to be what he was ambitious she should become — a good musician.

But it was all of no avail. After weary years of practice, and the hardest kind of work at the piano, she and all gave it up. To be sure, she got so that she could make her fingers go over the keyboard as the score on the rack said they should go. But that doesn't make music. And in time her father came to realize that it did not (though it nearly broke his heart to acknowledge the fact), and he gave her a respite from what had always been a dreary and senseless task for all parties concerned, not to say a bore to most of them. The only possible exceptions were the man who sold the piano and the teacher who got the money for his lessons!

The girl is a woman now, and she never touches the piano. You couldn't hire her to do so. She can't play; and, thank God, she knows she can't play! But she is not a dull woman, for all that. She can paint divinely! All the time that she was struggling with the piano that she could do nothing with, she was begging to be allowed to use her brush and pencil. She made pictures in her books, and covered the blank spaces on her sheet music with drawings of all sorts of things. But for all this she was reprimanded and called down. Forsooth, her father was no artist in color, and why should his daughter be? He could do nothing in that line, and why should she wish to? Let her be a musician! If she would try hard enough, and long

enough, she surely could be. He had done these things successfully, and with little effort, and he was her father; and why should not child do what father did so readily — what he so much loved to do?

There was just one good reason. She was "born short" on music and "born long" on color and form. It was not in her to be an artist in tone. It was in her to be an artist in color. Color was God's way for the girl; tone was the father's way. It is God's way that wins, give it time, if we do not kill our children trying to make them go as we wish, whether or not! And many children are killed by such treatment.

This case is no rarer in its second stage than its first. And others like it are on every hand, whichever way we turn. You know them, I know them; they are everywhere. There are few families that are exempt or immune from some form of the trouble, to a greater or less extent.

And what shall we do about it?

This: we shall first be willing to acknowledge the facts in the case, to make an honest estimate of the way our children are, regardless of notions as to what they should have been, theoretically. Then we shall plan for each child according to the indications revealed by these facts, and be satisfied to work the case out that way.

Yet this is a very hard thing for parents to do. We are all so anxious to have our children conform to the ways of other children; or do as society, or fashion, or custom, or tradition suggest or demand. How often have we all heard mothers say: "My child is just as smart as my neighbor's child, and what one can do the other can do!" This trouble crops out so frequently



in the work done in graded schools, and is a measureless source of annoyance to teachers of the rank and file. All sorts of jealousies between pupils and of quarrels among parents arise from this source. Because of it teachers are accused of partiality and of other high crimes and misdemeanors. In fact it is the black beast of nearly all schoolrooms; and the basis of the trouble lies, almost altogether, with the parents, who insist that their child, or children, shall do just what some other child or children have done, or are doing, regardless of the natural capabilities and aptitudes of their own offspring.

Parents who read these lines, will you ponder on their application to your own case, and to that of your own children?

This comparison of our children with others, and wishing ours to do what others do, and as well or better than others do, often works injustice to the children. In a word, it is because of our desire to fashion our children according to the influences from without their lives, rather than from the God-born impulses and powers that are within them, that we go wrong and make them go wrong.

I know a boy from a fine family who had an inborn desire to be a barber. Strange, perhaps, that this should be so, but so it was. His parents were chagrined beyond measure at the fact, and they tried to make a professional man of him. But it was a lamentable failure. And he is now a successful barber. And why not? He was ashamed of himself, and of the work he tried to do as a professional man, and he had full cause to be. He is proud of his work at the chair; he has a fine patronage, and his customers believe in him. I have no doubt he



and his well-done work will tally all right at Judgment Day; and is not that the main thing, after all?

But we don't want our children to be barbers, and blacksmiths, and such like. We want them to "wear a gold watch chain, and sit on a high stool," regardless of whether they have aptitude for that sort of thing or not. There is right where the whole trouble lies. In this matter we consider the conventional, the proper, Mrs. Grundy, the neighbors, our own notions, and nearly everything else that ought not to count for a pin's fee, before we ask the question, what are the natural capabilities and aptitudes of the child? And, for the most part, we prefer to try to make a poor professional, rather than a first-class mechanic or laborer of any kind, out of a child of ours. That is history.

Now, as I have said before, I do not pretend that it is possible, early in life, to tell just exactly what each and every child had best do for a living when he is grown. But I do insist that in very many cases it is perfectly clear, often quite clear in early life, what he should *not* do, or try to do, and that is something. The musical father I have spoken of should have seen, years before he did, that it was folly — not to say cruelty — to keep his daughter at work at the piano. I honestly believe he knew this all the time. He used to try to seem pleased over his daughter's playing, but there was no real pleasure for him in her performance. What he said and did was only to encourage her, and to buoy up his own hopes. If any one but his daughter had played as she did, — at her best, — he would have left the room. And yet he kept the girl at it.

How is it at your house, teacher, parent, or whosoever of you is trying to educate — yourself or some one else?

I do not underestimate the value of tackling difficult tasks, and of putting in hard, and perhaps disagreeable, work in mastering them. All these things have their place as educative forces. But what I do protest against is forcing children to continue to labor at tasks from which they can never produce anything that they can be proud of, or even be decently satisfied with. That is what crushes the soul. The girl I have spoken of was always ashamed of her piano playing. The boy who cuts hair is always proud of his work. There can be no question as to which is best for the soul.

And so I would say to parents: study your children, and in consultation with them and their teachers do your best to set their feet in ways that lead to soul-satisfaction regarding what they do in life; knowing that it is not what they do, but how they do it, that counts, and that will count forever; that "there is no trade but that he who pursues it may be a hero," and that a successful worker in the humblest of callings can call God to his witness, and with pride in his heart can say, "My Father, see what I have done!" But, parent, whoever you are, if your child is a botch, both you and he will be put to shame for ever and ever, so long as the botching is continued. No forgiveness, no atonement, can ever make such a wrong right. And the issue is, will we, as parents and teachers, keep on making our children go wrong? There is room for each one of all the children of all the people to go right, educationally. It is the fault of teachers, and especially of parents, if they do not go that way.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CONCERNING INSTITUTIONS

Collective Treatment of Specially Deficient Children who find no Place in the Public Schools — Some Public School Efforts to solve this Problem — What is done in New York — In St. Louis — Private and State "Institutions" for Defectives — Abnormality of Institutional Life — Testimony of Superintendent of Institution for the Blind — Paul Binner and Milwaukee Schools — Eau Claire, Wisconsin's, Record — Politics and "Asylums" — Statement of what such Methods have sometimes resulted in — Concrete Instance cited — Political Influence must be eliminated from all "Charitable" Institutions — What may Some Day be.

THERE is a percentage of our children who, as things are, cannot attend our public schools at all, namely, the "shorts" who are so wanting on some lines as to unfit them for doing any of the work now provided in these schools — the blind, deaf and dumb, and the idiotic. These are, each according to their own kind, now very largely massed together in "institutions" which have been specially organized for their accommodation. These institutions are in evidence in every state in the Union — they are a part of our present plan for educating all the children of all the people; and, as such, they must be considered in these pages.

Now please do not think that I am hostile to these special schools for peculiar children, or that I accuse the managers and teachers in such institutions of misrepresentation regarding their work and the possibilities of children committed to their care, because of what I



have said in a previous chapter. I have neither the purpose nor the desire to do any such thing. Many such schools do the very best possible for such children. The best of them often give these pupils a chance to move out on their "long" sides; and, gaining courage and strength from such natural exercise of what faculties they have that they can control and use, such children sometimes gain courage and strength in other directions; and this results for their well-being and advancement, to some degree, on their sadly short sides. All of which is well.

None the less, the fact remains that few children who are really powerless in one direction, or in many directions—few of these ever make very much progress along their congenital short lines, in any school, special or public. And when the fact of such genuine shortage is fully established, it is bad practice to try to force the child to normality where he is thus handicapped. To do so is to use him unfairly, his equipment being taken into the account. It will discourage him, make him distrustful of himself among normal children, and work harm to him in a multitude of ways. Rather such children should be so directed that they will move out strongly along the lines of what natural abilities they may have and so gain a self-confidence, at least in some directions, that will lead them not to be afraid, or ashamed of themselves when among other children.

On this count, so reliable an authority as Henry H. Goddard, Ph.D., of Vineland, N.J., has recently written, "It is particularly true of those high-grade cases which are not often recognized, save by an expert, and who look so much like normal children that it is a temptation to waste a great deal of time upon them in trying

to make them develop along normal lines and do those things for which they have not the brain or mind. As things are now, we generally keep on year after year in our endeavor to train these children, and only after their school work is passed do we discover that it was not possible for them to learn what we were trying to teach them. Then we know that, had we taught them the things they could do, we might have trained them to partial usefulness. *But what is readily seen to be true in these extreme cases is equally true in principle of all children. . . .*"

The italics are mine, but the words need to be emphasized, coming from the source that produced them. They point out the futility of trying to develop, in any or all children, faculties and abilities which, on certain lines, do not exist in these particular children. And that this author should state that such conditions are "equally true in principle of all children" is worthy of special notice and attention.

So we may say that if a child is born blind he may perhaps be brought to see. If the organs of vision are but partially bad, there is a possibility that they may be put right. But if a child is born practically without eyes, he can never see, and we might as well settle down to that conclusion one time as another; and especially, not trouble the child trying to make him see when he has nothing to see with. That is the point.

Of course we do so conclude in such a case of blindness. But how bad it would be to put blind children into competition with children with good eyes, and then scold them, or punish them, or mark them down, or degrade and disgrace them because they could not do as the good-eyed children do! This is what we should



be careful not to do. And yet something like this is done, almost by the wholesale, with children in our public schools who are as powerless to do the things required of them as an eyeless child is powerless to see!

Now, because of this fact, multitudes of children who are "born short" here or there, and so cannot do some of the work required of them in our public schools—work which normal children can do easily enough, but which all children are compelled to do if they stay in their grades—because of these things, many such children are dropped out of these schools altogether. Little or no provision is made for their peculiarities, for the way they are, and so they find small place in our public schoolrooms. They are of all degrees of shortness. Sometimes they vary so little from normality that we keep them in school for a while, occasionally for a number of years. But for the most part they drop back and back in the grades, always on the lines of their shortage. Frequently they are more than fairly bright in other ways, but this rarely counts. I know it does in some schools, but not in many. As a rule, they drop back if they cannot "pass examination," and they rarely can pass examination in subjects on which they are "born short."

So they drop back and back, till, finally, they get discouraged and drop out of school altogether. We all know how it is. The 100,000 children in New York City who are behind in their grades, as the school reports of that city tell us they are, are examples, each to a greater or less extent, of this sort of thing. They haven't dropped out entirely yet; but, for the most part, it is only a matter of time when they will do so, under generally practiced methods. Not one in a hundred,



I doubt if one in five hundred, of these children will ever stay in these schools long enough to graduate, under the present régime.

Since I wrote the above paragraph, I have spent some days in visiting the schools of New York City, and I am glad to say that I found, in several of them, "Odds and Ends" rooms, as it were, where these "born short" children, of various sorts and conditions, receive the special instruction their individual needs demand. In some of these rooms I saw some of the best pedagogical work it has been my fortune to witness. It is well. Let the good work go on. And it is going on; for, in some of the best public schools, all over the country, this plan of having special instruction for "short" pupils has been already inaugurated.

The city of St. Louis has recently begun to make special provision for its "short" children by establishing special schools for them in different parts of the city. These schools are under the immediate supervision of Superintendent George Platt Knox, who has specially selected a corps of teachers for this work. There is no attempt made in these schools to bunch together, so to speak, numbers of children who have similar "shortages," but the aim has been to locate the schools so that they will reach the largest number of children in a given district who are so "short," in any way, that they cannot keep their places in the grades. I cannot give details of the work done, as I should like to do, for lack of space, but I commend the plan St. Louis is working out as one of the best I have ever seen in operation. There are other cities where similar work is being done, and I wish them all God speed.

(I should like to add, just here, that it seems to me

the efforts now making to do the best possible for these "short" children are not as well directed as they will some day be. As things now are, the special work expended upon these children is intended to put them into such a condition that they can take up the regular work in the grades, which they have been unable to "carry." That is, an attempt is made to make their "shortages" come up to a fixed standard, and then to have them go on with their work just as though they were normal pupils. My impression is that time will show that such a method is a mistake. It is not in harmony with the ultimate facts in these cases, as has been so well stated by Professor Goddard in the paragraph I quoted from him a few lines back. The truth is that, where pupils are so "short" on certain lines that they have to have "special treatment," it is practically useless to try to bring them to normality *on these lines*. By far the better thing to do, as Professor Goddard wisely suggests, is to help such pupils move out strongly where they can, and in this way it is not impossible that they may, by the impulse thus given, improve on their "short" or weak places. The principle to be kept in mind is to do the best we can for these pupils on the plane of their inabilities, and to let that part of the work go at that. Meantime, we will keep on the lookout for any signs of improvement on these weak places, and if there are evidences of better conditions, make the most of them.

These cases can often be handled successfully by having such pupils recite in two or more grades in school. Thus, if a pupil is "short" in mathematics, such pupil may recite in a lower grade, where simpler work is done in this branch, and go on with his class in



work which he is able to carry. Such accommodations of pupils in different grades can readily be arranged for, if only there is a will to do it on the part of the teachers and the principal. And it is a most excellent way to try.

This mixing of grades will not destroy anything of real value in the schools. The military uniformity is all that will have to suffer. It will make some extra work, to be sure, but the results will pay for all that. It is only another way of fitting the schools to the needs of the children, instead of forcing the children to fit the schools, or to drop out if they cannot conform.)

But, whatever efforts are now making or are to be made to help out large numbers of children who are partially "short," as it were, there still remain many children who are *very* short—the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the idiotic—and for these we make so little provision in our public schools that they, as a rule, are out from the start. Few of the blind and of the deaf and dumb ever enter these schools at all. Many who are idiotic, to a greater or less degree, start in at these schools, go for a little while, and then are dropped out.

And these latter, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the idiotic, who are short in so many ways that the course of study in the graded schools in no way meets their needs—these are gathered together, in large numbers, because there is no place for them in the public schools, and sent to special institutions, there to be cared for and educated where their shortages can be taken into account. This is the common practice in this country at present. It is backed by the best and most humane of motives. Private generosity and state assistance have vied with each other to make provision for



these unfortunates, and institutions devoted to such work are to be found on every hand.

And yet —

Have you ever visited any of these institutions? If you have not done so, I wish you would, the first chance you get, especially if you are a teacher. For I assure you, you would find much therein to make you think many things. At least, I assure you that I thought many things when one of the best superintendents of a state institution for the blind in this country said to me, with tears in his eyes: "After an experience of eight years as the head of this institution, I say to you, frankly, that I really fear we do these children more harm than good!" Is not a remark like that, made by a man of the rarest ability in his profession, and who has had eight years' experience in his work, and who has had charge of thousands of blind children during that time — is not that something to think about, in this matter of the education of all the children of all the people?

And then he went on to explain the reason for his doubts. He said that, while they did a great deal for these children, in many ways, in the institution he had charge of, yet the fact that they had so many of them together, and that, for so many years (the formative years of each child's life) they were forced to keep the children in such unnatural surroundings on the social and domestic sides of life — that, for these reasons, the total result was of very doubtful quality.

"What we have here," he said, "is virtually a great big hotel. And the life these children lead is, practically, a hotel life. We care for them in every possible way." (The institution was a model of cleanliness and

the most scrupulous care, from top to bottom, within and without.) "But," he went on, "that is not what such children need. What they require is to be taught to care for themselves, and so become able to support themselves. And that we have small means for teaching them, in an institution like this. We do what we can to teach them to work, but the range we can offer them in that direction is very limited. The result is that, for the most part, the children sit around and visit, and play with one another, and have just as good a time as we can give them while they are here. We have them go to school, and do the regular school work as far as possible. But, outside of that, we do not do very much for them. The result is that when they leave this institution and go home they are so lonesome that many of them pine away and die in a very short time!" That is what he said!

And his idea was, further, that the proper place for these children to grow up is in the homes where they were born, and among people and surroundings that they will have to live with when they are grown; that they should be educated with other children, in our public schools, so that their childhood friends and acquaintances should become the friends and acquaintances of their mature years, and that the environments of their youth should be those of their manhood and their womanhood. That may seem to be only a dream, but there are schools in this country that are making the dream true as I write.

I do not know how many such schools there are. I do know, though, that in the days of the late Paul Binner, of blessed memory, I saw deaf-and-dumb boys and girls doing regular work in the Milwaukee, Wiscon-



sin, high schools. These children had been educated in public graded schools in that city, where special attention was given to them because of their infirmities. In that city, children of like affliction were classed together in separate rooms and there taught by special teachers in their grade work. They had been taught to "read the lips" and by the time they were of the proper age to enter the high school they were ready to go into regular high schools of the city, and do work there such as other children were doing.

In the city of Eau Claire, in the same state, I saw "mute" children in a ward school, with the rank and file of the children of that municipality, and all doing well.

In the high schools mentioned in Milwaukee, the pupils were in the regular classes, where some special, yet really minor, privileges were allowed them because of their shortage. But they could all "talk, and read lips," thanks to Mr. Binner's faithful teaching, and they seemed to be doing well.

In Eau Claire, these peculiar "shorts," which were in a ward school, sat in a room by themselves and had special teachers; but they played with the rest of the children at noons and recesses, went to and from school with them, and they lived in their own homes, with their own people. One of their teachers told me that she took special pains to have the parents of these pupils do what ought to be done for them in their homes—to train them to do as much as possible for themselves, things being as they were. In this way these children seemed to be growing up in a way that promised far better results than would be likely to come from the experiences and habits acquired from years spent in hotel life in an institution.



As this book goes to press, I learn that New York City and St. Paul, Minn., have begun to provide for their specially "short" children in their public schools. I am sure there are other cities which are doing this same sort of work. I hope there may be many of them. My reason for mentioning the cities I have referred to is because I happen to know about them, and of the excellent work they are doing. It is surely work in the right direction, and it will grow and increase as we come to modify our public schools and adapt them to the needs of all the children of all the people.

And that is what we shall do, "some day, some time." Of course, it will cost something to do this way, but we need not worry about that. For when have the American people ever shrunk from the establishment of educational ways and means, when they believed them to be for the common good?

But, of course, for many years yet we shall keep most of these children in institutions, as we are now doing. That method is now to the fore, and must have its way for a time. But that it will also have its day admits of small doubt. Its ways are not without virtues, but there are faults that must be corrected; and when these are plucked out, the probabilities are that the institutions will pass with them. It will not be an immediate attainment, but it will come, as we learn how to care for these "little ones" in the best way.

Meantime, let it be said that the management of these institutions for those who are "born short," or who are warped from normality by disease or misfortune—the "asylums" for the blind, the deaf and dumb, the idiotic, the insane, and the criminal—that all these institutions which are managed by the state must one day be

placed beyond political control! The necessity for this is pronouncedly apparent to all who are in any way familiar with the facts, as they exist in a large number of cases. Some states there are that have already arrived at this condition, but the general practice is still otherwise. But if the rank and file of our people could only know of the evils that the political control of such institutions inflicts on multitudes of those who ought not to be compelled to suffer one extra pang — if they could be made to realize this, they would sweep the system away at a single blow.

I once knew a case where the governor of a state sent word to the superintendent of one of these institutions to make a place for two of his nieces as teachers in the school. Neither of the young ladies had ever had a particle of training for the special work that such teachers had to do. Worse than that, they both hated the work, and only did it because they were poor! I saw their wretched attempts in their schoolrooms, and when I asked the superintendent why he permitted such teachers to remain in the institution, he told me who they were, and how they came to be where they were. "And if I dismiss them, I lose my place," he added!

In a state institution for the idiotic, whose management had recently been changed to pay a political debt, I once saw three children strapped to their beds and left alone in a locked room for hours! In the corner of this same room a poor paralyzed idiotic boy sat, strapped fast in a chair! He could move neither hand nor foot; and, it being a hot midsummer day and the windows of the room unscreened, the flies were all over his face and hands, and he could not brush them away! As the door opened and I came into the room, the little



fellow turned his eyes towards me and called out "mama" in a voice that would break your heart! It was the only word he could speak; and, oh, the pathos of it, as he uttered it!

Before we entered this room, the matron, who was showing me through the building, said, "I guess we had better not go in there," and she turned toward another door.

And I said, "Why not?"

"Because," she replied, "that is the worst hole in the house!"

And I said, "Oh, don't call it a hole!"

Whereupon she responded, "If you should see it, you couldn't call it anything else!"

And I said, "I want to see it!"

Then she unlocked the door, and I saw what I have just told about.

As the little boy in the corner cried "mama," the poor woman who was my pilot broke down completely, and said, "Oh, Mr. Smith, I don't know that God will ever forgive me for what I am doing here! It is terrible, terrible!" And she sank down upon the edge of one of the beds, dropped her head on her arms, and cried in despair.

And I said, "What makes you do it, then?"

"Because," she replied, "I don't know how to do any better! I have never had any experience in such work. I am doing the best I know how, but I don't know what to do!"

She then went on to explain that her son-in-law, who had been a country doctor and a local politician of considerable prestige, had recently been appointed by the new governor as superintendent of the institution;



that he had made her matron, to keep as much of the money in the family as possible! "For we have always been poor," she said! She also told me that the old teachers had "all been dismissed, and none of the new ones knew what to do with such children as were in that room." And that was why they were as they were!

This matron was a good woman; at least she told the truth when she said she was doing the best she knew how. But, oh, good people, the day must come when the like of this shall not be possible. The wail of that paralytic idiot boy, tied in his chair, and the helpless mutterings of those three children strapped to their beds — these, and others like them (for these are not alone) shall come up before God, and, some day, such things will cease to be, for God will have it so!

I saw the same institution some years later, when changes had again been made in management, for the same political reasons. The place was scrupulously clean, the children had good food and clothing, and were well cared for, so far as their bodies were concerned. But that was about all. The superintendent was only another doctor-politician, and the teachers and assistants were all in their places because of political prestige. Not one of them had ever had any special training for such places as they held, and there was an air of any-way-to-get-along about the entire institution. I did not meet a soul about the place that I felt had any idea whatever of what the words "love" and "sympathy" meant, or might mean, in the premises. It all seemed to me as exploited on the commonest material plane, with never an idea or an action that extended much above the waistline of all parties concerned.

When I compared this institution with another, in a neighboring state, which I once visited, the contrast was most marked. In this latter I saw the best pedagogical work I have ever set my eyes on. I saw some fifty idiotic boys, some of them exceedingly "short" in many ways, at work making brushes of various kinds. Their attainments were something wonderful. A good many of the brushes were of the coarser kind, the making of which did not call for any very delicate manipulation. Others were of fine quality, and required great skill for their successful construction. But all the work was well done, and the boys worked at it with a will. The teacher was a practical brush maker, who loved the work and the boys he taught how to do it. I never saw such devotion and skill embodied in a teacher as was manifested by this man. And his boys (he called them *his* boys) were happy, cheerful, and getting on. What more was needed?

But —

Two years later I visited the same institution. This wonderful teacher was gone, and the brush shop was closed! The boys were lounging about, or were herded in rooms, or on the lawn, in charge of "keepers." It was the same old story. There was a new governor. He had made a clean sweep of the personnel of the institution, and his political helpers, men and women, were now in charge, their sole qualifications being that they had done good work during the campaign!

The place was clean, the children were well fed, and I saw no signs of their physical abuse. But I saw nothing in the way of special provisions for their particular condition. It was all on the material plane, with no recognition of the possibility of anything more.



There was some attempt at routine schoolroom work, of the regular graded school sort, but it amounted to little or nothing. Not one child in a hundred in the institution could do anything with it worth mentioning. / Some of the teachers had done that kind of work before in public schools. That was claimed by the governor as proof positive that they were fit for their places. For is not teaching teaching? Truly so!

Several of these teachers were bright and pleasant young women, but I saw only one that was at all fitted for the work they were all trying to do. I do not accuse them personally. It is the political system that I condemn. That is wholly bad. And, because it is wholly bad, it must go. It is a bad thing, help push it along. You I am talking to.

And, one of these days, when the system and the institutions it runs have both passed away (the institutions will remain long after the political system that now runs them is gone — will remain, I believe, to do an untold amount of good in the way of pioneer work, in discovering how best to handle each special kind of "shorts" committed to their care; and then, having served their special purposes in the order of things, they too, will retire), when both these have passed, then we shall have so well learned how and what to do for these variants from the normal, that we will make places for them in our public schools, where they can grow up in natural surroundings, and so come to fill their natural places in human society. Such a consummation may be a very long ways off, is doubtlessly so, but some day it will come. And it is your business and mine to help it arrive.



## CHAPTER XXX

### "MAKING AN ACT"

Agnes Repplier's "Bouquets of Good Deeds" — The Two Sides of the Issue — The Limits of "Authority" — Tyranny and Freedom — "Swine, why will ye Squeal?" — Bearing of this Principle educationally examined — The Good and the Bad in its Practice — Punctuality — Possible Abuse of this Virtue — Tardy Boy with Weak Heart — Compulsion and Self-righteousness — Laziness — Bill Nye as a Lazy Man — Truancy — Professor Bodine's Testimony — The Right and the Wrong of "Making Acts" — The True Mission of Drudgery.

IN one of her most clever sketches, Agnes Repplier tells how she and her schoolgirl chums used to "make acts." To make an act consisted in deliberately and purposely doing something that one naturally disliked to do, some duty whose performance went against the grain. She goes on to tell what credits they were given in school for making acts, and how they kept a tally of them, out of which they made "bouquets of good deeds," which were duly presented to their teachers on festive occasions. All of which was counted as of great moral worth and a means of educational discipline to the girls.

As Miss Repplier tells it, she has her fling at the practice, and perhaps with good reason, all the items in the case, as she was obliged to practice them, being taken into account. None the less, the fact remains that there is virtue gained by making acts, if only the acts made are of the right kind. And right there something needs to be said, since this idea is closely related

to the education of all the children of all the people, as this has so far been attempted and worked out.

I have always admired the old woman who said, "What God and circumstances put on me I'll try to stand and keep good natured about; but what John and the old man are to blame for, I'll be bound if I'll put up with!"

There is a whole lot of cant and nonsense, not to say wretched tyranny, current in this business of "making acts" in life, not of the kind Miss Repplier speaks of, perhaps, but of a similar sort, in all kinds of places, that we have to meet with. It is held by the pronounced advocates of the dogma that it cultivates virtue to the highest extent to do just what one is told to do, no matter what, and ask no questions and make no replies. But the fact is, it makes all the difference in the world what the cause is that stands behind the required obedience, as to the virtue that is forthcoming from conformity to its dictates. If the compelling agency is "God and circumstances," as the old lady put it, making acts from such cause will develop virtue of the divinest quality. For this cause martyrs have gone to the stake, and Jesus hung upon the Cross. Let no one say one single word against the sacrifice of one's selfish desires on the altar of duty which is God-born.

But all this is one thing, and being compelled to do things merely because "John and the old man" say so, is quite another thing, and right there is where the difficulty arises. It was the like of these latter "acts" that Miss Repplier reviled.

There has been no more frequent sin, through all the ages, than for selfish men and women to set up their own authority and label it the will of God or

virtually that. Nor has this sinning been confined to the church—any church—more than to other forms of centralized power. True, most churches have been guilty of the practice, to a greater or less extent, at some period in their history; but equally, or more guilty, have been kings, emperors, presidents, governors, parliaments, congresses, legislatures, parents, school-teachers, and the whole line of those who are "in authority."

I suppose the reason for this is to be found, not in our own innate depravity, but in the infiniteness of our individuality. The fact is, we are each of us so great, in our inmost selves, that there is an inherent desire for omnipotence on the part of every one of us, and we are wont to mistake the wish of our own hearts for the voice of Deity itself. I think few cases of tyranny could ever be found where the tyrant could not justify himself and his acts, if his side of the story alone were told. All tyrants are not bad-meaning men. Indeed, it might be truthfully said that they are all well-meaning men, from their own viewpoint. Most excellent men and the tenderest-hearted women have justified slavery, from the earliest times; and the most exacting school-masters, or set-in-their-ways schoolmarms, are cocksure that their requirements are not only just and right, but that they are the best means for compassing the proper education and development of the children under their care.

And so, in passing judgment on these and others like them, we need to be merciful, even as we would have them show mercy. I may need mercy myself, even for the words I am now writing! "Such as you and I" has a wide range!



But mercy must have its limit, like every other good thing; or, the first thing we know, it will fall on the other side and result in an evil that is worse than the one it was set to mend.

And so, to come to the point that is germane to the subject in hand, namely, what all this has to do with the education of all the children of all the people, there is very little good that can ever come to a pupil by forcing him to "make an act" which is based solely on the whim, or notion, or caprice, of some one, or a whole lot of ones, who are in authority over him. More than that, for a pupil to yield obedience to such demands without protest or attempt to be free from the thralldom, breeds a spirit of unquestioning servitude, stultifies the intellect and dwarfs the soul, and tends to make the pupil more of a slave than a man. And that is why the state has a right to look after this matter.

It may be said (and doubtless will be, by some who read these pages) that there is small need of preaching the doctrine of freedom and independence to American children; but do not the records of every year since we have been in existence as a nation teach that it is only this spirit which has saved us alive and given us a name and a place among the nations of the earth? And from whom have protests for the reverse of these things come? From those who would maintain their order of things, regardless—from "stand-patters" and their likes. Peace, peace, they shout! "Swine, why will ye squeal?" they continually do cry. They are not bad people who say these things—not bad in some ways that are currently called bad. Many of them neither swear, nor drink, nor live licentiously; and yet, if they could have their way with those with whom they are out

of patience for not doing as they say, they would soon bring about a despotism that would be Russian.

All this has an especial bearing on the matter of forcing courses of study upon pupils; and of school government, as it perhaps pertains to them. The right, in both these cases, turns on the basis of authority for requirements imposed. If this is seated only in the notions of the dictator, and has no solid backing in the eternal order of things as they pertain to each one who is asked to conform—in such case, the good that can come from obedience to demands can be, at best, only of a negative sort.

When the backing of a compulsory course of study is only the dictum of men and women who have the power to compel its observance, small good can come to the pupil who "makes an act" of undertaking its requirements. If the course and their natural abilities tally, well and good. Then they make no act by conforming to it. But if they only do as they are told, or as they are compelled to do if they stay in school at all, little good can come to them from such servitude.

The same principle holds good in the matter of school government. All of this that is based on the welfare of each child, he being what he is, is good. All else is bad, no matter who backs it, or how it is done.

Which leads me to say that the greatest of care should be taken by teachers in the use of wholesale methods of securing conformity to requirements, no matter how just these may be in a general way.

For instance: Punctuality is a virtue which our schools should surely inculcate, to the limit. But the teacher should never forget that there is a limit. I once saw this: A teacher brought a boy of ten to the prin-



cipal, and said: "Charlie has been tardy again, and when I asked him why, he said he slept too late this morning. Now, don't you think that if a boy can't sleep enough at home, I had better make him sleep in school, where we can all see him do it?"

And the principal said he thought that would be a good thing. So the boy was taken to the schoolroom where he belonged, some shawls were spread on the floor near the teacher's desk, and on these the little fellow was compelled to lie down in the presence of his laughing schoolmates. He was as pale as a ghost when he lay down, his hands were cold, and his teeth chattered as if he had the ague. But that made no difference! He was habitually tardy, and his bad habit had to be broken up. That was the why of it all.

Now this teacher did not mean to be bad. She was really a kind-hearted woman, in most things. And she was trying to do her duty, in a way. But she was a tyrant, so far as this boy was concerned. And I will tell you why.

The woman who taught drawing in that building, and so went from room to room, happened to be present when this boy was disgraced before the school. She said nothing (and she was wise in that she did not speak), but she made it her business to follow the boy to his home and see his parents. They told her that the boy was "too lazy to draw his breath," and that he "wanted to sleep all the time." And it struck this teacher that this was not a normal condition for a boy of ten; and as the parents had only reproaches for the little fellow, she, on her own responsibility, took him to a physician who knew his business, and asked him to examine the child. As soon as the doctor put his hand



on the boy's pulse he said: "Why, this child is suffering from a weak heart. It is a marvel that he is alive."

The fact was that this boy's heart was beating only a little over forty times in a minute, when it should have beaten seventy-five, and that was the cause of his tardiness and of his laziness. And when a few weeks' treatment had put that heart shipshape, both these defects were cured also. All of which is another proof that "these things are in the body."

And what does this truthful tale teach regarding "making acts"? It teaches a great many things which you know as well as I do, and which we all need to give heed to. It teaches, first, that before we say "you must" to a pupil, we should be sure of all the facts in the case. Second, that there is great danger of our being bad when we mean to be good and are too self-righteous to see more than one side of the case. Third, that what is often called laziness is really inability. And those are three great lessons that every teacher and parent ought to master and hold a diploma vouching for efficiency in, before being allowed to have anything to do with the governing of children.

Which leads me to say that I would like to write a chapter on laziness, if I had room for it.

But won't you work it out for yourself? In a word, my own opinion is that what we condemn (not to say damn) in people as laziness arises often from inaptitude, or inability, to move out successfully on certain lines. Just think of that, and see how it fits your case. I am very sure how it fits mine.

I know a young man who from his earliest youth has been branded as lazy. Yet he once rode a bicycle from Chicago to Boston! Would a lazy boy do that? We

need to reform our definition of this fault. Perhaps what we need more than that is to understand it better. When I traveled with Bill Nye, our manager told me that I should find him the laziest man I ever saw. As a matter of fact, I never knew him to rest for a single instant. He was averse to physical exercise. But his mind was always on the alert. As he said, he could never get his "think tank" to let up for a minute. He died from mental overwork at the age of forty-six. Was he lazy?

With these hints, you can work out this problem of laziness for yourself. But don't neglect to do it if you have lazy children to deal with, either in your family or in school.

And all children are lazy on some lines. They are specially liable to be so between the ages of eight and fourteen. So many others have treated that fact that I need not go into it here. But put all the reasons for laziness together, when you work out the problem, and act according to what they all say, and then you will have less cause to pray for forgiveness for your sins against lazy children than you otherwise would.

This naturally leads to the subject of truancy, on which it is truth to say that the great bulk of truancy is caused by the unwillingness of children to undertake what they have little or no ability to perform. Professor Bodine, of Chicago, who has had charge of the truancy affairs of that city for a number of years, testifies that more than eighty per cent of the cases that he has had to deal with are below the fourth grade, and that he rarely ever knew of a case of truancy where the child was doing well in school and was abreast of his class in his grade work. "They are practically all children who



do not, or cannot, get along well in the work they are required to do in the schoolroom" is the way he put it. He told of one "truant" who had been kept in one grade for seventy-two weeks, because there was some of the work that belonged to that grade which he could not master. What wonder that such a boy was a truant? The marvel is that he did not commit suicide!

Which brings us back to the same old point; namely, that we must make our schools fit the pupils if we compel the pupils to attend them. A truancy law is a good thing, in so far as it keeps all the children in school. But it needs to be supplemented by work in these schools that shall be suited to the needs of all the children we legally compel to attend them. And it will be.

Need I protest, once more, that in saying these things I am not advocating happy-go-lucky, any-old-way methods in school government and work? I am doing no such thing. I will even go farther and declare that I seriously doubt whether "moral suasion" is a sufficiently potent force to make our schools a success. There are many cases where, things being as they are, "the stern hand of the law" is the only power that will keep things moving as they should. All I ask for is, that when this same stern hand of the law gets in its work, it should do so on the lines of justice, decency, and common sense, and not merely in the execution of its own arbitrary power.

I need not extenuate. Every right-minded person who reads these lines knows what I mean; and for the rest, there is no use in talking. Yet even these will see things right some day. The world does move. If we compel our children to "make acts," let us be sure we are right in doing so, all the facts being taken into the



account. Then such "making" will be good for them. Otherwise not.

I am tempted just here to pursue this theme further along the line of school government and its related subjects, but space forbids. I must remark, however, that I believe the method of having the pupils of the higher grades in our public schools govern themselves is a move in the right direction; and that it will one day largely obtain in these departments. It is all of the right sort, the development of self-controlling individuals. It is not an easy way to go. Its early experimentation and exploitation will be crude and full of errors; all sorts of ignominy will be heaped upon it by monarchical unbelievers and those who lack faith in all mankind; but, in spite of it all, I believe the method of self-government in the higher grades of our public schools will win its way to the front. It has the right marks upon it, and so it must succeed.

Perhaps I ought to add that I do not at all ignore the fact that there are a great many things, in the lives of all of us, that we must do whether we like to or not. There is more or less drudgery for us all. And drudgery has its place in the development of virtue, doubtless. All I insist on is that we and our children should not be made to drudge simply for drudgery's sake. We should all learn to do unpleasant tasks when we must, but that must should be "God or circumstances," and not the dicta of some one who merely wants to compel us to obey his will. That is, we should not do disagreeable things merely to "make acts." We should do them with pleasure when genuine duty requires. Such "made acts," bunched together, will surely make most fragrant and beautiful "bouquets of good deeds."

## CHAPTER XXXI

### MANIPULATION

Definition of the Term—Growth of this Quality the Measure of all Progress—Its Possible Transmission—The Teaching that Counts—The Business of Schools as seen from this Viewpoint—Simplicity of Ancient Work on these Lines—How its Volume grew—Learning what has been done *vs.* Learning how to do—A Place for an Economic Waste Basket—Manipulation and Books—Boys who are Book-dull but Manipulatively Strong Otherwise—New Possibilities in Educational Work opened just here—The Doctrine of “Short” and “Long” as related to Manipulation—Range of the Faculty and some of its Results—The Letter and the Spirit of this Law.

THE word that stands at the head of this chapter has a bad name, in some of its meanings; but it is a good word for all that. And it is in its good sense that I introduce it here, as germane to the issue of educating all the children of all the people so that they may become good citizens, as they would not all become but for the education which the state gives them. As I use the word “manipulation” here, it means the changing of things from a cruder to a more perfect condition, through the agency of human deeds. Man finds things in a certain state, or condition; and by manipulation he changes them so that they shall better serve his needs. That is a simple way of saying what I mean by manipulation.

And the progress of the human race has always been measured by the growth of the power to manipulate, on the part of mankind. When man had no manipulative power he was on a par with the rest of the animals.



But when he put an edge on a piece of stone, and used that to fight with or to chop wood with, then he left the ranks of the mere brute creation and began his ascent of the ladder of mental and spiritual progress. And every step that he has gained in his upward climb has been at the hands of his ability to manipulate something. I need not work out the details. You can do that as well as I can, now that you have the idea.

This manipulative ability on the part of mankind manifests itself in a million ways. It deals not only with stone and steel — wood, hay, and stubble — but it busies itself with the stuff that dreams are made on, with ideas, and the highest spiritualities. The range of its work is limitless, and wherever it leads the way, there a larger civilization follows. But wherever its hand is stayed, stagnation results.

Now manipulation is a quality that can be transmitted from one generation to another. The fathers can show us how and what they did; we can learn their ways, and so can plant our feet on the round of the ladder that they stood on, to say the least. And then, if we are what we ought to be—if we will do as much for the future as the past has done for us, we will proceed to do some manipulation on our own behalf, and so the race will progress a little more, the world will be some better for our having lived in it. This is the story of the growth of civilization through manipulation.

And when the one who knows how shows some one who doesn't know how the way to do what he of the first part does, and succeeds in getting the party of the second part to do as well, or better, than he of the first part does, that is teaching that counts. All else is a fake.

Schools are the places set apart where this teaching



is to be done. In a word, it is a part of the business of schools to transmit manipulative ability from one generation to the next. This much they must do, if they keep what is coming on abreast of what has been, or is. They ought to do a good deal more, and give the advancing host the power to march at least a little farther along the road of progress than their predecessors have ever traveled.

Of course, in the early ages of the race all teaching was very simple, and the range it compassed was exceedingly narrow. Only a little manipulation had been done, and this was of the primitive sort, the mastery of which it was not difficult to transmit. Teaching was then no complicated affair, and success in the art was not difficult. When the stone-age father had only to have his son take a stone in his hand and do as he did, neither the theory nor the art of education was hard to master.

As the volume and range of manipulation grew, then indeed the art of teaching became more and more complicated. And by and by the accumulated mass of things that could be done became so great that no one man could master it all.

Then began the practice of teaching the mere story of what had been done, instead of the doing of the same! And right there is where both teachers and schools began to make a great mistake. Of course, the records of what had been done must be preserved. So much was right. But a mere memory knowledge of a record of what has been done is a far different thing from the ability to do well at least some of the things that the record tells about. And when teachers and schools began putting the bulk of their time and labor,

and that of their pupils, on the mere *learning about what* had been done, rather than on *doing* some of the things themselves, then they set their feet in a wrong path. And some of them have gone a long way on this wrong road, and they are still loath to leave it.

Because, you see, it is only *the ability to do something* that makes a human being of value to himself and his fellows. He who can only tell what someone else has done is a very small factor in civilization. He can add but very little to the progress of the race. A citizen is of value to society and the state only as he has the ability to help society and the state to be better because he is a member of them. And whoever fails to do this is a burden and not a blessing to all parties concerned. The state cannot afford to make burdens for itself to carry. It must get returns for the money and effort expended in trying to make helpful men and women out of helpless children.

A great deal of what was once of value by way of manipulative ability has fallen into the rubbish heap, as time has gone on. It may be well enough that the record of all this sort be preserved; but the day of the utility of longer bothering our heads very much about it has long gone by. Surely we have no right to demand that all the children of all the people shall memorize all this rubbish of what pertains to the dead manipulation which was done in former times. There is a place in this world for the economic use of a wastebasket.

When our schools teach the manipulation of books rather than their memorization, then we shall have a large amount of time for the pupils to spend in learning to manipulate other things. This, as I have before



stated, but must say again, will make room for manual training and domestic science in our school courses, so that no crowding will result. This will give us a chance to teach our boys and girls how to do things, rather than merely to memorize how somebody else has done them; in which last there is small virtue.

Then, too, we shall have time to give our boys and girls a chance to try their hands at bits of manipulation on their own account, opportunity to handle things in their own way and as the spirit gives them power to utter, and not merely things that can be wrought upon with the hands. They can be led, each in his own way, to fashion some idea of his own, to give it a form that no one else has ever shaped it into; to manipulate something, in some way, as has never before been done, and so to contribute something to the advancement of the race. Is this too much to expect? I believe not.

Did you see the report of the boy who could not be kept in school after he was fourteen, and who then made a wireless telegraphic apparatus, according to plans of his own working out, and began stealing government messages as they hurtled through the air? And a teacher said to me the other day, "I have a couple of boys in school that I can hardly do a thing with in their classes; but if there is anything the matter with the mechanism, anywhere in the building, they will get after it, and put it right, nine times out of ten; and work like heroes, and be as happy as larks while they are at it." Yea, verily!

The permanent success of our schools, the measure of what they really do for the good of the body politic, both turn on how much and how well they teach all the children of all the people to manipulate things—all



sorts of things, as many things as there are children, and of as varying grades of coarse and fine, material and spiritual, as there are varieties of quality in matter and in individual being. What untried ways there are here for us to travel, what unexplored fields for us to discover and survey!

And herein lies the inspiration for all true teachers, the goal that lures them on. Columbus made a great addition to the world's map, and to human possibilities, when he found the western world. What new worlds may you and I yet find, in the unsailed seas of human possibilities that are open in every schoolroom! Such possibilities are always present, and this is why the calling of the teacher is the greatest of all. If only we can so manipulate these possibilities that they shall ultimate for the utmost.

I cannot leave this phase of the subject without recurring once more to the doctrine that forms the basis of all I have to say in this treatise; namely, that it is of little use to try to teach pupils to manipulate stuff which they have no natural aptitude for handling. The simple truth is that only such manipulation as can be carried on with clear and intelligent thought on the part of the manipulator is of real value as an educative force, or as a former of character. And along lines where there is little or no native ability, it is practically impossible to secure definite, clearly defined thinking — certainly nothing fresh and original and which will be of real benefit to the individual doing the work, and to the community of which he is a part.

Of course the reader will take into account the fact that native abilities do not always all reveal themselves at once in the lives of some individuals, as I have more

than once declared in what I have already said. Sometimes they do not appear till manhood is fully attained, so far as years are concerned. My point is, that it is not wise to try to develop manipulative power where no native ability is manifest. If such ability appear soon or late, make the most of it, but do not make a pupil "go through the motions" where there are no signs of such ability.

And, withal, every teacher should make a most earnest effort to exploit manipulative ability that has stuff in it. When a girl is taught chiefly how to manipulate a fan, or to do the conventional thing in society, she is not being fairly dealt with, so far as her education is concerned. When a boy is taught how to be a dandy, and to spend money regardless, in a word, to be "a good fellow," he is sinned against by those who plan his education on such lines, or who allow him to do so. The fan may be a woman's weapon, and Chesterfieldian manners doubtless have their place, to a degree, among truly well-bred men; but merely these, and little or nothing besides, make a poor outfit for a successful American citizen. Grace in women and polite bearing on the part of men are items by no means to be left out of the account. It is only when they are given undue prominence, that makes them conspicuous rather than subsidiary, that fault should be found in this regard. Common sense and not conventionality, the spirit and not the letter, will keep us right here, as elsewhere, always.

All of which means that "vocational" studies, rather than merely "cultural" studies, as such, should form the bulk of the training given to all the children of all the people, in our public schools.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### READING AND LITERATURE

The Art of Reading—Different Methods of Acquiring the Art compared—Psychological Phase of the Subject—Silent Reading and Vocal Reading—Definition of Literature—The Winnowing-Fan of such Definition—The Mission of Language—History, Fossils, and Mummies—Monarchical Literature—"Passed for us"—Distinction between Themes—The Teaching of Literature in View of these Facts—College Entrance Demands regarding Literature—The Real Mission of Teaching Literature in the Public Schools—What Teachers of Literature in these Schools should try to do—Democratic Literature—"To Let" on Parnassus—Querulous Critics—The Kind of Literary Seed to be Sown in the Public Schools—Proofs of Real Literary Knowledge and Ability.

THE matter of the manipulation of books, briefly noted in the last chapter, naturally leads to a discussion of what such work is chiefly for; namely, the securing of a knowledge of literature through the medium of reading. Reading comes first in this discussion, and hence a few words regarding it. I cannot treat fully of the methods of acquiring a mastery of the art of reading, but I can note a few leading and significant principles which cover the whole ground.

The first acquirement to be gained in order that one may be a successful reader, in the largest sense of that phrase, is such mechanical mastery (manipulation) of the art of gathering words off the page with the eye that there shall be no conscious effort in the act.



Of course, my critic may contend that if one does not comprehend the meaning of the words thus gathered by the eye, such reading is in vain. Which is correct. But the point I want to make is, that this mechanical act comes first in the natural order of the process of reading, and until it is mastered, little progress can elsewhere be made; and that this fact has often been ignored, or lost sight of, in the teaching of the art. Thus, of late years, it seems to me too much stress has been laid upon the "thought content" of what was read, to the exclusion of the business of getting the words off the page with neatness and dispatch. This criticism applies almost entirely to the lower grades, where the fault is most in evidence. In much of the reading work done in these grades, more attention has, of late years, been paid to "analysis" of what is read than to gathering the words with the eye. I cannot believe this to be either wise or right.

The way to learn to read is to read, and to keep doing it. In psychological phrase, the mechanical act must be so mastered that it can be relegated to the subconscious self before that part of the art of reading is a success. And when that work is brought to such perfection that it will "do itself," then one has all of his mind free to think of what one is reading about. That is the true philosophy of the art of successful reading.

If you doubt this statement, try to read some very blind piece of handwriting, upon which you have to spend much time and energy, giving the text your closest attention, and see how much of the "thought content" of the same you are able to gather as you read. There is not enough of your mind, so to speak, to do both things at once. And this is always the case

where it is hard work to master the mechanical work of reading. There can be no successful gathering of the thought which words are set to convey until one can easily manipulate the words themselves.

(I hardly need say that it is only silent reading that I am speaking of here; namely, the art of gathering the thought of the author from the printed page. Oral reading, with its adjunct of elocution, is a most interesting theme, but it is too far afield for me to consider in these pages. On these topics "there has been so much said, and on the whole so well said, that I will not occupy space, etc.")

The work to be done in learning the mechanical part of reading is akin to the "finger exercise" of the piano player. It is largely a matter of physical dexterity, of technique, if you will, and there is only one way of acquiring it for most people, — namely, by continual and unintermitting practice. So our pupils in school need to read, read, read, and so they will acquire the mechanical ability to manipulate books. That is, most of them will.

Of course, all the while they are doing this they can be practicing on reading that is worthy their time and attention. No finger exercise is to be practiced merely for its own sake. No reading should be required from a pupil merely as an eye gymnastic. The point is clear for those who have eyes to see.

And as one masters the mechanical part of reading, a knowledge of literature grows apace if the work is done as it should be. But here guiding posts need to be set up, and directive lines run — a few at least.

When the pupil begins the study of literature, as such (and even before that), it is essential that both he and his teacher should have a clear conception of what



literature really is, and then of what they are going to do about it.

What do you think literature is? I wish you would try to define it. I have tried, and here is the result of my effort.

Literature, that is worth while, is a record of those experiences and those ideals of humanity that are of sufficient value to make them worthy of being perpetuated; and it is the business of the study and teaching of literature in our public schools to make the future experiences and the ideals of humanity better than the experiences and the ideals of the past have ever been.

I am well aware that this definition of literature and of its purpose as an educative factor in our public schools will be deemed far too utilitarian by many who read these lines. But my notion is that this judgment will not be lasting, and that the more the subject is considered from this viewpoint, the clearer the truth will appear.

Because, the fact is that there have been an infinite number of fallacies held in the past on this subject of literature, and its mission to mankind. For the most part, these may all be massed in a single group; and all the wrong-goings, both in the making and accepting of literature, so called, may be summed up on this one change, namely, the counting of form as substance, the mistaking of a graven image for the living spirit of God.

What mountains of alleged literature are plucked up and cast into the sea of oblivion by such an analysis! What multitudes of its makers are engulfed at the same time, and how they all sink out of sight together! All the sticklers for mere form, all the copyists and imitators, all the writers of words for words' sake, all the



inventors of high-sounding phrases which have been reckoned great only because of their sonority, all the word painters whose chief aim it has been to startle or astound, all the "retailers of platitudes delivered in an orotund voice" — all of these, and of those like them, are swept away so that the places that once knew them will know them no more forever.

All of which means that art for art's sake, so far as literature is concerned, is a fraud, that is, counting this phrase as it is ordinarily understood, namely, the formulating of anything, with no purpose beyond that of the form of the thing formed. Language was intended to express ideas, and whenever it is diverted from such purpose it is misused, not to say abused. So the men who talk when they have nothing to say, or who write merely to fill columns, are not making literature; and it is a sin to make people waste time listening to the first, or reading what the second have set down, merely spoiling clean white paper thereby.

Again, there is ever so much that has been written and said in the past that has served its time, has had its day, and so is no longer of worth to humanity, except as a curiosity, or as a relic. As such, it may be of brief interest, just as mummies and fossils have a certain historical value. And for such purpose there can be no valid objection to their preservation and use. But, beyond this, they should not be permitted to have a place in the working outfit of modern life. Their sphere is in museums and curiosity shops. They have reached the realm of the "has-beens"; they are virtually dead, and for the most part the dead should be buried. The grave is a very useful institution in this world, and it is not kind to any one too long to deprive it of its dues.

This is why the great bulk of monarchical literature is fast passing away as a living force in human society. Shakespeare's plays, those that have to do chiefly with royalty, are no longer popular upon the boards, not because we have no actors great enough to present them, but because the spirit of democracy has taken such a hold upon the minds of the people of to-day that they have lost interest in what happened to kings and queens, as such, in the days gone by.

Not but that Shakespeare most successfully did his work in depicting royalty. There is no question about that, or about his great art in doing what he did. What he wrote was once great literature. Both as to form and in spirit he made a most perfect record of the experiences and ideals of the royalty he dealt with. The only trouble is that many of the experiences and ideals he depicted are no longer worthy of being perpetuated; they can no longer be made to serve in making the experiences and ideals of democratic humanity, now and yet to be, better than those of monarchical humanity once were. That is the crux of the whole situation.

These themes of Shakespeare have "lived their little day."

"Passed, passed for us, forever passed, that once so mighty world,  
Now void, inanimate, phantom world.  
Embroidered, dazzling, foreign world, with all its gorgeous legends,  
myths,  
Its kings and castles proud, its priests and warlike lords and  
courtly dames,  
Passed to its charnel vault, confined with crown and armor on,  
Blazoned by Shakespeare's purple page,  
And dirged by Tennyson's sweet sad rhyme."

This is not saying that Shakespeare and Tennyson have "forever passed." There is much in them both



that will still abide. Their style will remain, although that on which much of that style was exploited has passed away. There is also a large amount of their subject matter that is still alive. Wherever these men wrote of the fundamental issues which are common to all races and all peoples, in all times and everywhere, they struck chords that will never cease to vibrate while the world endures, and the style they used in exploiting these themes will never perish from off the earth.

Therefore there are distinctions among themes, in the writings of both these men, that should always be held in mind by those who would utilize, for all the children of all the people, the experiences and ideals that these authors have made a record of. The principles involved in the issue are very simple, and they are all plain to him that understandeth. All of Shakespeare, or Tennyson, or any other authors, that can be of use in making better men and women than have ever yet been—all these things are of value, and will continue to be valuable just as long as they can successfully accomplish the work whereunto they are sent. Beyond that they are of little use, save as relics. For art's sake alone they are of small value. So long as they can help in making a finer and grander humanity they will live, and justly so.

These principles apply to the makers of literature and their product in all ages and climes, and they need to be kept especially in mind by all teachers of literature, particularly those who have to deal with the children of all the people. Bring any author, or his work, to this test, and judgment will not be long delayed. The question that every teacher of literature should constantly keep in mind is: Will a knowledge of what I am



trying to impart make the experiences and the ideals of my pupils better than they would otherwise be? Whenever a teacher can honestly say yes to such an interrogation, there is no danger of going wrong in the work done in the literature class, and it is a comparatively small affair whence comes the subject matter of their teaching.

On the contrary, if the teacher of literature is forced to confess, "I fail to see what good can come from the instructions I give," then, indeed, is her lot a hard one, and that of her pupils is harder still. I wish I need not say it, but I am forced to record that, in all my observations, I have found few teachers of literature who have not made the above quoted confession. As a rule, teachers of literature in our public schools teach the pages of literary matter that are required by college entrance examinations. This they are forced to do by the system they work under, and over which they have no control. In large part, the work they are forced to do consists in compelling their pupils to memorize the names of authors and what books they have written, with dates to match. Perhaps a few excerpts from each author are read, but the author-book-and-date-lists are so numerous and extended, and committing them to memory is such an arduous task, that there is time for little else.

Can any one tell how such work as this will make the experiences and ideals of those who do this drudgery better than they would otherwise be? The question is fair, and pertinent, and it ought to be answered.

There is no more powerful influence for good that can be brought to bear upon a pupil than can come through the proper study of literature. To teach a

child to love books, to know authors (just a few, perhaps, and these not necessarily the same for any two pupils) through and through, is a work that angels might envy. The living voice perishes, but the printed page remains. And to lead a pupil to get out of books what living and loving souls have put into them, to teach boys and girls so that books shall be their dearest friends — this is something worth while, this is what makes the teaching of literature an art filled with divine possibilities.

And the first requisite for the attainment of such results is that the teacher love the literature that she tries to teach. Emerson says that "he only can give who has," and if a teacher has no love for the literature she tries to give her pupils a knowledge of, she cannot succeed in getting them to love it. And unless *they* love it, all the work they do in it amounts to little or nothing. It is all a study of "words, words," as Hamlet has it, and these are as useless to the pupil as those on the page before him were to the Prince of Denmark.

There is all the difference between life and death in the two ways of teaching and pursuing this study. One way, there are live human beings, with hearts that pulsate with warm red blood, and whose souls shine through speaking eyes. The other way there are corpses. The teacher who can teach the literature she herself loves will lead her pupils into the living way. Those teachers who pursue cyclopedic methods will drive their pupils through literary graveyards.

The result of all study and teaching of literature should be to inspire the student along the lines of what is revealed in the literature studied and taught. No



book read, no poem conned, should stop with itself. They should all "continue beyond." They should give to the student power "to make for himself poems, essays, histories," or whatsoever. And this should be something far and away beyond mere imitation. Both pupil and teacher should ever keep in mind that "Rhymes and rhymers pass away," and that "poems distilled from poems" count for naught. Need it be said that such results can never come from repeating what is in a text-book, be the same never so good? Nor can they be reached by any teacher who teaches only what literature she is required to teach by the course.

Again, it needs to be said that the literature taught to all the children of all the people must be democratic, both in form and in spirit. Truly, our teachers and pupils need to heed the lines:—

"Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia;  
Cross out, please, those immensely over-paid accounts.  
On the rocks of your snowy Parnassus  
Placard 'removed' and 'to let.'"

Good! But when will our teachers and pupils be permitted to heed the suggestion? Parnassus was good in its day, and much of what it stood for has been translated into current language and philosophy; but Parnassus for its own sake can be excused, for the most part, from the curricula of the major part of all the children of all the people.

Then, too, there is danger that the teaching of literature, upon formal lines, will make mere querulous critics of our students. How often have we seen this! Only to-day a mother said to me, when speaking of her son who was away at school: "I have gotten so that I almost hesitate to write letters to my boy, for he keeps



coming back at me with nagging criticism of my letters to him." Surely, the teaching of literature which thus results is wide of the mark. The point is really too contemptible to be worthy of notice, and my only reason for mentioning it is that it is so shamefully common. "Reform it altogether," ye teachers of this sort.

Beyond question, the future success of this republic is dependent on the literature it shall produce. If this is live, strong, far-reaching, and deep-descending, of a quality that touches the hearts of the masses and stimulates them to the best there is in themselves, anywhere, everywhere, then this nation is safe, and it will grow in the right way, continually. *It is in our public schools that the seed that will produce such literature must be sown ;* and this seed must be of a sort that will take root and grow in the hearts of all the children of all the people, and bear fruit in their lives as citizens of this republic. Nothing less will serve.

Here, then, teacher, pupil, is the test to bring to all study and teaching of literature in our public schools: Will it serve on these strong and fundamental lines that pertain to successful citizenship? If what you study or teach will do this, it is well, and no one will care to ask further questions. But if not, then stop taking public money for your work, which is of no public use. Work for a merely selfish end if you choose to do so, but be honest enough not to make the general fund support you.

What our public schools need, in the matter of teaching literature, is that the teachers be freed from the bondage that now holds them in its thrall. There is scarce a teacher now engaged in this special work who could not, and who would not, do most excellent service in her peculiar calling if she could be permitted to teach

what literature she loves to teach, rather than what she is compelled to teach in order to serve a purpose that is really foreign to her undertaking and desire.

But, it is said, there must be some standard ; we must have some common work, or how shall we know what to examine our pupils in ? Nonsense ! Why should I be compelled to post myself so that I may answer your questions ? Why not you answer mine ? Why should the boy who stands before the professor to be examined in literature be forced to give proof of a knowledge of books that the professor is learned in ? Give the boy a chance to tell what *he* knows about books, any books that he has read, and of which he can speak, and it is easy enough to make up one's mind as to his abilities to do future work. It is the tyranny of the powers that be, and not a lack of receptive power on the part of pupils, that retards the true study of literature in our public schools. And let such be anathema ! Let there be a democracy in the study and love of real literature among all the children of all the people, and so will the procession, all of it, move on.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### SOME THINGS ABOUT METHODS

A Little at a Time and Slow—Practical Test advised for Each Reader once more—Author's Experience—Personally paying for Failures to really teach—"Hands off!"—Original Methods the Test of the Power of the True Teacher—Such Methods to be encouraged in all Teachers—Concrete Case cited—The Real Mission of Method—Lack of Faith in ourselves the Trouble here—The Voice of God in our own Souls—The Proper Use of "Authorities"—The Court of Final Appeal.

So much has been written and said upon the subject of methods in teaching that one hesitates to add even a straw to the burden now on the camel's back, which is already well-nigh broken with its load. And yet I cannot refrain from piling my forkful on the top of all. But this shall be general, and not particular; and so, perhaps, it will prove to be less weighty.

The chief word that I want to say on this subject I phrase in the vernacular as follows: "Don't give it to the children too fast." It is by disregarding this simple principle of pedagogy that more poor teaching is done than in any other one way that I know anything about.

Any teacher can be brought to realize this fact by trying to teach a pupil to do some concrete thing that must be done just right in order to be successful at all. For instance, suppose you try to teach some one (any one will do) how to tie a square knot with a string, and to do it right, every time. Try that, some day, and watch



your process, if you succeed in getting good results. Yes, watch your process, anyhow.

Or, what is a better test still—far better—take a class of a dozen or so and try to teach them, all at the same time, how to tie a square knot, and see how you will succeed. Watch your process there, too.

This experiment will reveal to you your shortcomings as to methods in teaching better than anything I have ever tried. If you can take a class of twelve children who do not know how to tie a square knot, and at a single lesson get half of them so that they can tie such a knot right, every time, you are a wonderful teacher. And your trial will show you the necessity of definiteness of direction and slowness of procedure as you never saw it before, or I am greatly mistaken.

We tell our pupils too many different things at once, and so muddle them. This begets in them the habit of trying to do what they only partly understand how to do, makes them indefinite in their actions, uncertain in their purposes, and untruthful in their work. And all this is bad.

I learned this lesson of “not too fast” or “not too much at once” when I was in a factory that I once owned and operated. We employed a large number of boys in the mill, and they all had to be taught to operate the machines they had to handle, so as to get good work out of them. Unless they did this successfully, they ruined the lumber they put through the machines, and all that they spoiled I had to pay for! And it was a marvel how much they could spoil, till I learned how to teach them as they needed to be taught in order to get good results. Nor was it till my book-keeper showed me a balance sheet that proved how we

were losing money, that I began to study my methods and to see right where the trouble lay. Such study showed me that the loss was nearly all my own fault. I had not taught the boys well how to do their work. I had given it to them too fast, and too much at a time; and they were a lot of slouchy workmen, turning out imperfect work, the loss on which came out of my pocketbook.

*If all teachers had to pay for their failures to teach well, out of their own pockets, we should have far better work done in our schoolrooms than we now have.* The pocketbook nerve is very sensitive to losses, and it has a way of demanding a repair of leaks that is very salutary. Try teaching some concrete thing, to some one whose failure to arrive will cost you money, and then you will learn the chief things that pertain to "methods" in teaching.

And on the heels of this comes the direction "hands off!" Ah! That is the hardest of all. It is so much easier to do a thing ourselves than it is to teach some one else how to do it, that we are all apt — so apt — to take things into our own hands and settle it that way. But this is all wrong. Hands off! Not till you can teach with your hands tied — I could almost say with your tongue tied — will you be a first-class teacher.

I saw some excellent examples of "hands off" work in a manual training school I visited a short time ago. The teacher stood at his desk and told the boys what — just what — to do. He gave his directions with the utmost explicitness, in simple language that every pupil could comprehend, and he gave them but one at a time. More than that, he was sure that every pupil in his class had done exactly what he was told to



do, just as he was told to do it, before he proceeded to the next step.

And it did require so much patience and such careful telling to get these results from *all* the pupils! I stood by, and it was such a trial to me to keep my own hands off. A boy near me was so awkward. I am sure there was no possible wrong way that he did not blunder into before he got the right way the teacher was trying for. But he finally got it. And he got it himself. That's the point. And so he could get it again, the next time.

And I was once in a class in German where there was never to be a word of English spoken, come what might. There came up a new word in the lesson, which no pupil knew the meaning of. And it would have been so easy for the teacher to turn her English tongue loose, and tell her pupils the meaning. But, bless her dear life, she knew enough to keep her English tongue tied. And with what little German her pupils were masters of (for it was a "beginning class") she went to work to get to them the idea which the new word was set to convey. And if you could have seen that class, all with knitted brows, and eyes focused on the teacher as she talked to them in German, you would have learned a great lesson in pedagogy, in this matter of keeping hands off. But she won, did this teacher; and when she did, her class knew something. How easy it would have been to have said, "Look it up." Bah!

The art of manipulation cannot be acquired by having some one else move your hands for you. You must move them yourself. That is God's way of teaching how to do things. The wise teacher will make note of this and act accordingly.

Hands off!



Another cautionary word needs to be said regarding the different ways of treating different pupils in the same class or grade. A concrete instance will illustrate what I mean. I once saw a class in arithmetic working on the subject of subtraction. The teacher was putting forth her every energy to have her pupils master the principle of "borrowing," and they were doing their best to follow as she led. But in spite of all she could do there were some members of the class who could not grasp the philosophy of what was done. She was an excellent teacher, full of resources, and apt in illustration, and she did her best; but it all went for nothing with the "slow ones."

After the class was dismissed we talked it over, and presently I said: "Why not tell these helpless ones just what specific thing to do in order to obtain the result, and let it go at that, *so far as these pupils are concerned.*"

"I'll try it," the teacher said. And she did. She asked the "shorts" to stay after school with her a few minutes (not to disgrace them, but for help), and then I watched to see what she would do. And here is what she did: She took a not-too-hard problem, to start on, and said: "Now when the top figure is less than the bottom one, call the top one ten more than it really is; then take the bottom one away from this bigger number, and write the difference in the same column, under them. Then call the next lower figure at the left one more than it is, subtract it from the figure over it, and set down the answer, and so on."

When she gave this last direction, namely, to call the next left-hand lower figure one more, she looked at me with a sort of reckless, I-don't-care-if-you-are-here wink,

and whispered, under her breath, "That's the way I always do myself, and it works all right!" and went ahead with her work. And then, *mirabile dictu*, in ten minutes from that time, after working faithfully with the boys with this method, she had those pupils actually subtracting and getting correct answers, every time. The children were so astonished they hardly knew themselves, and they left the schoolroom kicking up their heels with delight. I watched them, and saw them stop at the first corner, sit down on the curbstone, and together try a problem, all by themselves. Doubtless they were curious to see if the plan would work away from the schoolhouse. I am sure they found it would.

Does any one object to this? No sensible soul will do so. Not that I would advocate this method of teaching subtraction to *all* children. For those who can comprehend the analysis of the process, such work is good. But for those who cannot, the "easy way" is far better than none. The method this teacher used, in this case, involves a principle that goes a long way in the practical work done in the schoolroom. Far better is it that these slow ones should go home happy, and *able to do something*, than that they should leave their schoolroom discouraged, or perhaps disgraced, and so generally "at outs" with what they were asked to do that they will hardly even try to do anything at all.

And so, in point of fact, this matter of method resolves itself into a very simple proposition, namely, to do for each pupil what the needs of each pupil require should be done, using our best endeavors to find out just what these needs are, and the utmost of our ingenuity to meet the requirements which the situation calls for. The teacher who will work by such method will teach, if she



has any aptitude for the calling. If she hasn't, she ought not to be tolerated in the schoolroom, no matter what method she may use, or where she may have acquired it. The teacher who has to "consult the authorities," for every move she makes, who "has no head of her own" for her work, had better try some other calling. She ought not to be permitted to teach in our public schools, no matter how many diplomas she may be possessed of, or how fine a written examination she can pass.

There can be no itemized method of pedagogy that will be of universal application to all the children of all the people. We can all get "helps and hints" from a thousand and one sources. But the whole business can never be put into a book, neither can it be gotten out of a book. Here is a place where manipulation can only be partially transmitted. The ultimate art must be individually acquired, and personally exercised; and neither acquirement nor exercise can be obtained without practice upon the real thing, with flesh and blood children, in an actual schoolroom. That is the final word about methods in teaching.

Any method that can be used as a servant to both teacher and pupil is good, just so long as it knows its place, and will keep it. Any method is bad, no matter where it has come from, no odds who originated it, if it becomes a master, and holds its user in bondage. And here is where teachers should arrive through their own inspiration. Here is where they should prove themselves greater than any or all "authorities," and should stand in their own strength, sufficient unto themselves, and to the work that is given into their own hands. Well did Jesus say "call no man master," and there is



no place where His words are more forceful than to a teacher in a schoolroom.

The chief trouble with us all, on this score, is that we have been unwilling, or afraid, to do our own work in our own way. It has been too much bother for us to worship God with our own work, as we know we ought to; and it is so much easier for us to bow down to some man-made or system-made idol that we can easily get next to, than it is to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. There is the rub. We have put our faith in textbooks, and in professors of this or that, and in the dicta of Associations, and in what those in authority have said when in conventions assembled—in all these things, rather than in *the voice of God in our own souls!* And therein lies the essential cause of most failures to teach school well, or to be possessed of methods that will really result in first-class work.

All these authorities, etc., are good as means. They are worthless as ultimates. The true student of methods of pedagogy will forage over the whole field of the experiences and ideals of other teachers; will listen to them all, and note well what they say, will observe them all and note well what they do. Then, gently, but with undeniable will, he will free himself from all bonds that would hold him, and teach as his own soul tells him he ought to. It takes nerve to do this, but it is done. I have seen it done more than once; yes, many times. What we need is to have it the rule rather than the exception.

Here endeth, then, the chapter on methods. You can make them for yourself. No one can make them for you. Others can suggest, and perhaps direct, but you must ultimately settle the business for yourself.

The only question is, will you do it? If you try it, be wise and not foolish in your doing. Don't be a narrow bigot in the premises, and make your bigotry an excuse for doing just as you please, regardless of everything and everybody. That is far worse than merely following a leader. The proof of the worth of your methods (and they must be brought to the trial) is your success in keeping all the children in your school, and in doing the best possible work for each one of them while they are there. If you can do that, your methods are good, no matter where they have come from. If you fail to do this, your methods are faulty. There is no appeal from this conclusion. God is the judge, and there is no higher court.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### MORALS AND RELIGION

The Jungle this Theme leads into — Morals easier to agree upon than Religion, in the Public Schools — Coeducation — Social Mingling in the Public Schoolrooms — The Blessing to Democracy of Such Fact — Sectarianism and Proselyting no Place in Schools for all the Children of all the People — The Love of Righteousness — "He maketh all Things by Number" — Horace Mann on the Purpose of Democratic Education — How School Work can Foster all these Things — A "Square Deal" possible here — Where Unfairness creeps in — The Bible in the Public Schools — Some Suggestions on this Point — Special Work for the N. E. A. — Denominational Hymns no Place in Public School Singing — How the Jungle may be made a Highway fit for All to travel in with Profit and Joy — "Vital Religious Fire" the Real Fusing Element for Democracy.

I AM well aware that I am entering a jungle of thought and feeling when I set out to say even a few words about morals and religion in our public schools. Concerning the first, the way is open and fairly well trod for a space; but regarding the second, there is largely undergrowth and tangle where some day there will be a royal road to God. If I can help, just a little, in making a preliminary survey for such a public highway on these two subjects, one which all the children of all the people can travel in, I should be glad and thankful beyond all telling.

In both these matters, the underlying principle is as simple as all great basic motive forces always are. The main issue is what will make good citizens of all the children of all the people. Whatever will do this has a



rightful place in our public schools, both as regards morals, and, equally so, as regards religion. The only pinch comes when we attempt to consider what the specific things are that will bring about the desired results. There is where we quarrel and part company, so many of us. There is where all the friction arises. These are the things that obstruct the way and make the whole subject a jangle of discord and distrust, rather than a place of harmony and good faith.

But now, is it not possible for people who dwell together in love in so many other ways and places, to come under the same spirit in these regards? It surely seems as though it ought to be so. Anyhow, let us reason together over the situation for a few pages, and then see.

In the matter of morals in school there is not very much lack of agreement. There are still some parents who rebel if their children are "made to mind" in school, but these are so few and far between that they are hardly a recognizable factor in the problem. For the most part, our people recognize the fact that obedience to rightful control is a fundamental quality in a good citizen, and hence they stand for the cultivation of this virtue in our public schools. So far, so good.

There are also some people who are anxious about the coeducation issue, who suspect the results which they fear may come from having boys and girls go to the same school. This feature is chiefly in evidence in cities, especially in those in which there is a considerable constituency that has high regard for conventional ideas having their roots among the aristocracy across the water. Among these, the medieval notion prevails that sex is something of a mistake, at best, and that the error should be hidden from knowledge, as far as pos-

sible, especially amongst girls. They ostensibly hold to the her-soul-was-like-a-star-and-dwelt-apart idea, the ignorance-is-bliss theory, for femininity. In some circles this cult is growing in this country, manifesting itself in the genesis of the chaperon, a creature who was a stranger to our fathers and mothers, who "sparked" unwatched, and were blameless!

However, these need give us but small concern. God's eternal laws do not suffer to any great extent, or for long, at the hands of society's peccadillos. "Male and female created he them," and there was no mistake in the act. That is the way things are, and they will stay so. Boys and girls are born into the same family, and it requires men and women, both, to make a successful civilization.

To be sure, there may be room for experiment as to whether it is wise and best for boys and girls to pursue the same studies in school; but that can all be provided for under the new order of "electives" in our schools. But the individuals of each sex need the modifying, restraining, stimulating, and truly spiritualizing influences of their opposites, during the growing years of their lives in school. Of this there can be no doubt, in the eternal order of things.

Then there is the question of permitting, or forcing, children of all social grades to mingle together in the same school. The moral results of such community are not infrequently challenged by those who are counted as "our best people." And that there are some serious issues involved, just here, is not to be denied. But, as a matter of fact, the dangers are few, and the possible benefits to all parties concerned are as many as they are great.



As an exterminator of the class microbe, the public school has no equal. Or, to change the figure, the public school is the womb of genuine democracy; the fruitful soil which brings forth bountiful crops of true brotherhood and enduring fraternity. It is not a leveler, but a builder-up of all parties concerned. It cuts out the cancers of conceit that tend to destroy the vitality and virility of wealth and aristocracy; and it burns away the plague-spots of prejudice and hatred that are so deeply rooted in the body of the rank and file. It plants healthy love and wholesome respect for all in the hearts of all the children of all the people, and as a social force, for the establishment of a civilization based on the eternal principles of truth and justice, the world has never seen its equal.

And these are the things that must never be forgotten; nay, that must be emphasized, in all our estimates of the real value of our public schools. All criticisms regarding their faults, either as they have been or as they now are, should be tempered, and modified, and in large measure excused, by our acknowledgment of the inestimable blessing they have already proved themselves to be as makers of democracy. All their past and present shortcomings are as nothing when compared with the great results they have yielded, on the lines of good fellowship and love, amongst all classes of people. There is not one who reads these lines who cannot verify the truth of this, in his or her own life. Think of the men and women, in all ranks of life, whom you now hold in high esteem because of the knowledge of them that you gained in the public school.

And whatever modifications we make in these schools, let them be by way of intensifying their democracy, of



broadening their power to make friends and lovers of all who enter their doors. Let us plan to make them include rather than exclude; to gather all and to reject none; and to be able and fit to do all this with the utmost success, for the best interest of all and each. For so shall our schools become a moral force that shall be worthy the financial and patriotic support of every citizen, without exception.

A resident of New York City once said to me: "Go down to the lower end and see what we do for the boys and girls down there. We take them in by the ship-load, when they don't know a word of English, and in six months we have them singing the 'Star Spangled Banner' to beat the band!" He was right. And he might have gone on to say that if you would follow these same children up through the schools, you would presently find that you could hardly tell them from the "native born"—those who stayed by till they got through the high school. Their twelve years of discipline in this institution (which some one has called the great American stomach) have digested them and transformed the product into blood, bone, fiber, and spirit such as good citizens are made of. A single generation wipes out almost the last vestige of the "foreign" in all such cases, and *their* children are Americans, all, henceforth. The pity is that so few of them stay twelve years in the public school. But this fault is mending, day by day.

So, on the moral issue, we are doing well. We need to do as well on the religious. The reason we have failed to do so, thus far, is because of our narrowness—not to say bigotry, to be frank about it. We are so sure that we are right and that all others must be wrong

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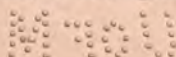
in matters of religion, that we are uncharitable, and not infrequently unjust; sometimes overbearing, and occasionally tyrannical. It is not pleasant to say this, but let the truth be told.

And it is because of these things, which all religious sects, and those who claim to be not religious at all, are more or less guilty of, that we get into trouble. If we were not all so anxious to proselyte, and to compel everybody to come our way, we should get along well enough. If we were as willing to allow our brothers and sisters under the flag religious liberty in our schools as great as the political freedom that we give them in the state, there would be very little cause for complaint. No teacher ever asks whether a child is of democratic, republican, or mugwump parentage. No teacher would be permitted to teach the tenets of any special political party in school. But this does not bar the teaching of patriotism, of devotion to the flag, and of love for what it stands for.

Now can we not be equally broad-minded and fair in the realm of religion? There are certain basic principles that are common to all religions, just as there are certain patriotic elements that all political parties hold in common. Why not unite on these, and teach them to our children, and then let them differentiate on the holdings of sects, isms, and doxies, later on?

What are these items in common, religiously speaking? some one asks. All I can do is to answer as it seems to me, which I am glad to do, to the best of my ability.

I think that a love of righteousness, and an honest attempt to attain it, in all the affairs of life, pretty nearly covers the whole ground. Surely there is no form of





religion which ought not to include at least so much; and, given this, with all it implies, we have a good foundation for anything special, or particular, that may be added to it, in any or all religions. All the religious teachers that I know anything about agree on this; and if we could bring all the children of all the people to love it, and lead them to strive, with all their might, to attain to this standard, I am sure we should have a citizenship that would get along pretty well, religiously and all other ways, come what might.

My notion is, then, that we can teach at least so much of religion in our public schools, with good results for all, and with bad results to none. And with this as a basis, let the various sects build thereon, as they can, or may.

What do I mean by righteousness? The word speaks for itself. There is a right and a wrong to everything in this world, and righteousness means an alliance with the first, in thought, and word, and deed; and a rejection of the last, continually. So far as meaning is concerned, it is really a very simple proposition. Practically considered, it may not always be an easy matter to determine, in every case, and at first hand, just what the right is; but to constantly inculcate a desire to "know the truth" and to act in accordance with its dictates, must make for the formation of character that will produce a most excellent foundation for religion of any and every sort.

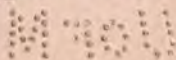
I once saw an old arithmetic whose preface closed with these words: "And now I commend you to him who maketh all things by number." Good! I wish I could have studied arithmetic with the man who made that book. I am sure he taught righteousness to his



pupils, and begot in them a love of the Author of All Truth. When I studied arithmetic, the chief thing I was taught was how to find the answer. No effort was made to show me what it was all about—the real mark I was, or should have been, shooting at all the time.

That is a great phrase, "maketh all things by number." There is a basic religion in it from start to finish. A realization of what it means will beget reverence and awe and love and true regard for Him Who maketh all things thus. As the children grow in years, I believe most of them—all of them who vibrate in that plane—can be led to see this through the means of their arithmetical work, and so can be brought into those ways of true religious experience and practice that are derived from this source. Let them learn that all that the most powerful telescope can reveal, all that the most highly magnifying microscope brings to light, and all in between, and all beyond, either way—that everything, everywhere, that we know anything about, is "made by number," *perfectly* in order, truthful, righteous, without variable-ness or shadow of turning. Is there any doubt but that the making of such true wisdom a part of the lives of our school children will make them better men and women, better citizens, more anxious to bring their own acts within the laws of righteousness, and so within the realm of true religion? And can such religious teaching do violence to the doctrines of any sect in all the world? There can be but one answer to this question.

Horace Mann used to say that we want to rear "generations of men and women who are above deciding great and eternal principles upon low and selfish grounds." Will not such teaching of arithmetic as I have suggested tend to produce such a result?



And what is true of arithmetic is equally true of any and all studies that have a place in the public school. A child can be led to see the eternal order of things on the earth by the study of geography — things regarding the physical construction of the world and its political divisions and arrangements. (How such a view of this study surpasses a mere memory knowledge of mountains, rivers, states, and their capitals, merely as such.) History can be made to teach the pupil the devious ways of humanity in its upward struggle towards life and light. (How much more this is than the memorizing of stories of battles and the dates on which they were fought.) The study of language and its use, of literature,—of both these, present or past, so long as there is life in what the pupils work on,—of all the sciences, of the arts and trades,—all these studies can be so conducted as to impress the spirit of truth and righteousness upon the student, practically upon all the children of all the people in all our schools. Is this not a consummation devoutly to be wished?

Does this mean the Bible in our public schools? some one may ask. It may, or it may not. It all depends. If the Bible can be used in any school to furnish the growth and upbuilding of unsectarian religion, well and good. But not otherwise. And right there is something for all fair-minded citizens of the United States to stop to think about. What we must all keep in mind is that these schools are for all the children of all the people. All of the people pay for them, and all must have "a square deal" in everything that pertains to them, religion as well as in everything else.

And it is not a square deal to take advantage of a situation, and endeavor to make our schools proselyting



religious institutions, just because there is a majority in them one way or another. Our public schools are neither Protestant institutions nor Catholic institutions, nor are they sectarian institutions of any kind or sort. Indeed, much as some people would dislike to have it said, it cannot be justly claimed that our schools are even Christian institutions, in the sectarian use of that word. They are neither Christian, Jew, nor Gentile, Mohammedan, nor Buddhistic. They exploit the interests of no religious denomination of any name or order. And yet, for all of this, they can be truly conducted on genuine religious lines.

Yet how often have we seen our schools treated as if they were to be conducted on denominational and sectarian lines. And I am ashamed to say that the greater part of such treatment has, so far, been largely on one side. The truth is, it must be neither on one side nor the other. No sectarian teacher and no community has a right to exploit their peculiar tenets and beliefs in a public school. To do so is wrong, no matter who does it or how large a majority may be which backs up such doing. The very foundation of our Republic is based on the idea of religious freedom, total and absolute; and he is a traitor who would violate that principle whenever he found himself in a position where he could do so without immediate danger of being called down or found out.

Shall the Bible be used in our schools then? Yes, if it can be used and not abused; if it can be made to serve the growth of those things that are common to all religions without producing prejudice against any. If it can be used for religion's sake, and not for sectarian purposes, well and good. This is fair to all, it is unjust to none, and from this position it seems to me there can be



no appeal in the mind of any truly patriotic and genuinely religious citizen, no matter what his particular sect or creed may be. No citizen wishes to have his own children proselyted by any sect, in or out of public schools. By the same token let us be fair, and not try to do to others what we would not like to have others do to us and ours. That is a "square deal," and nothing else is.

It can truthfully be said that the Bible contains a great wealth of material that can be used in our public schools, as has been suggested. I know of no book in the world which has in it so much of spiritual truth that is of universal application to all classes and conditions of men, women, and children. But it is also true that, as the various sects have interpreted some parts of it, all sorts of isms and dogmas and creeds are evolved from its pages. And it is further true that the most of our teachers have some special sectarian bias (as it is natural they should have, and as there is not the least objection to their personally having), and hence, if they are left to read the Bible to their pupils as they choose, they are *likely* (very likely, as a matter of fact) to attempt to transmit their particular creed notions to their pupils, through the reading of this book.

Which things being true, would it not be wise for some good, sane, unprejudiced men and women, representing all sects and denominations and religions of all sorts, to get together and compile a book of religious readings for our public schools which should embody the fundamental ideas and principles that are common to all forms of religious belief. There is plenty in the Bible to fill such a book, and there are numberless things to be found outside its pages that are well worthy of a place in such a volume. Why may not the

National Educational Association take this matter up, and deal with it as the situation demands? Some institution of wide-extended influence ought to do this work, and I know of none better suited to the purpose than the N.E.A.

And this is a work that needs to be done. The charge is sometimes made that our schools lack the religious element, and sometimes that the religious instruction given in them is sectarian. Neither of these charges should be longer possible. And yet, as things now are, they can be brought with a considerable degree of truth. Let us make an end of such possibility and bring about a condition in which pure religion and undefiled shall be taught in all our schools, and every semblance of sectarianism be banished from their doors. Nothing short of this will satisfy the religious needs of all the people.

And what has been said of the religious readings in our schools ought to be said, with double emphasis, regarding the religious singing done in them. No denominational or sectarian singing books should be permitted to be used in our public schools. No hymns that have a doctrinal or denominational bias should ever be forced upon all the children of all the people; that is, such hymns should have no place in any public schoolroom. There are plenty of deeply religious hymns, hymns that breathe the spirit of truth and righteousness in their every word and line, hymns that all religious people can agree upon for our children to sing, and these should be brought within their reach. So let fit hymns be added to fit religious readings, and then, instead of the religious jungle that we are now *floundering* around in in our public schools, we shall

have a highway straight through the premises, one that all the children of all the people can travel in with profit and delight, singing songs of all-enfolding joy as they go. What patriotic citizen would ask them to march otherwise?

What this nation needs above everything else is to be saturated through and through with a living religious spirit; to be "fused with vital religious fire," which shall enter into and become a part of every thought and word and deed of every citizen of our Republic. The place to implant such virtue is in our public schools. If we can do that, and do it there, all will be well. All the sects have their places. The churches are, and of right ought to be. Let them all grow and flourish, each after its own kind. For this also is ordained. But let not any of them or all of them attempt to proselyte children to its particular creed through the means of the public schools. Let these things be, and the problem of morals and religion in our public schools will be solved.



## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE COMMON SENSE OF IT ALL

Definition of Common Sense—Precedent and Conventionality—  
Slow Progress of Conservatism—Its Mission in Social Life—  
The Make-up of our Democracy—A Polyglot People—Self-  
Interests—Machinery and Wealth—The Aristocracy and the  
Proletariat as they face Each Other To-day—Labor and Capital  
—Other Conflicting Interests—The Function of the Public  
Schools in all this Chaos—Some Details that must be strictly  
looked after—The Past as related to the Present—What are  
we going to do about it?—"Is it a Dream?"

COMMON sense is that faculty of the human make-up that insists that the truth is good enough, and that has a way of getting at the truth, regardless of precedent and conventionalities.

True, precedent and conventionality lift up their voices and wail, and make a great outcry whenever common sense gets at the truth regardless of them; but in spite of such groans and tears and prognostications of ill, this primary element of the general soul steadily pursues its way on and up. Sometimes it moves "with incredible slowness, so that with the eye it is impossible to tell which way it is going," as Cæsar once remarked regarding the river Arar. Again, it reaches its goal like a thunderbolt, crushing and burning its way through everything in its path. Not death itself is more relentless or remorseless in its working than is the common sense of the people, when it once gets started, in the establishment of a truth which it sees clearly is good enough.

It took common sense more than two hundred years to come to the point where it determined to establish the truth about slavery in this country. But it made quick and awful work of it, once it got at it. And all the while precedent and conventionality were working overtime to prove to common sense that it was all wrong, and that the truth in the premises was not at all as represented. But common sense insisted; and common sense demonstrated the truth of its position. Truly, the voice of the people is the voice of God, if only the noise we hear be really the people's voice.

There are other instances in point that will readily recur to the reader without my noting them here. What I want to say is, that it is a most excellent plan to heed the voice of God before it gets so loud and terrible that it blasts and annihilates.

It is in the hope of helping to unstop some of the deaf ears, and to open some of the blind eyes of precedent and conventionality, that these pages have been written. I know that both these ultra-conservative social forces are braced squarely against many, not to say most, of the positions taken in this book. None the less, common sense insists that the truth is good enough, and I am perfectly willing to be brought to its bar for judgment on what I have written or said. I make no plea for partiality in my favor, nor need I ask that the opposite side be treated with no favoritism. It is simply a case of "May the Lord judge betwixt us twain," and such a bench is not open to the suggestions of special counsel.

The one persistent position that common sense occupies regarding the public schools is that they should educate all the children of all the people. If they will

do this, the method by which they accomplish the end is of small moment. But by just so much as they fail to do this, by just so much will they be brought into judgment by the common sense of the people; and by just so much will all inefficient ways and means be swept out of the path, and others set up in their places. These things will come in peace if the right shall lead. "They will sweep in storm if they be denied." Common sense believes it is better to have them come in peace than to deny them so long that they will be forced to sweep in storm in order to arrive.

It is no fable that the issues which the last fifty years have precipitated upon this nation are the most momentous that any people has ever faced. Babel was a decorous afternoon tea party compared with the polyglot clamors that are coming up all over this land from voices whose origins are as diverse as the races of the earth, and whose shoutings are as varied as their self-interests are multitudinous.

And all this is intensified by the intermingling, in every cry, of the issue of the distribution of the vast hoards of newborn wealth with which the establishment of machinery has deluged civilization since you and I came into this world. On this count, the cry is fast rising to a roar, and the voice of God is evidently to be heard therein. Common sense is insisting that the truth is good enough here, also; and it is searching diligently for ways and means by which all may come to their own, even if it has to disregard precedent and conventionality to compass such result.

And, as of yore, these two conservative factors are doing their old work over again. They are largely blind and deaf to the real issue, and persistently declare that



what has been must be, though the heavens fall and "the public be damned." They do not put it just that way, but it is the real spirit of their position.

The wealth of the world has been augmented by a greater amount in the last half century than in any one thousand years of previous history. Men used to plow, or mine, for money. Now they exploit some enterprise that is based on machinery, or some of its adjuncts, stock it to the limit, and a printing press does the rest. And the output of the press goes, for the most part, to the men who furnish the blank paper which an imprint turns to gold. Billions have been made in that way since you and I can remember, and the problem of what to do about it is still on. For the most part, these billions are in the hands of the few who printed them, and the many are in a state of unrest because of the situation. Common sense sees a truth in the premises, and it is beginning to talk about it, out loud.

And back of all this is the independence of thought and spirit on the part of the masses, a new situation brought about by an era of scientific thinking, which has hardly yet reached its years of discretion. There is much of the bull-in-the-china-shop in the use of this new acquirement, by the rank and file; but that does not alter the facts in the case. It is a situation and not a theory that confronts us; and we cannot shirk the dominating question, What are we going to do about it? *The proletariat can no longer be hushed by an edict from the aristocracy.* The day of such method is past, and we are not yet quite sure what is to take its place. Common sense insists that the truth is good enough. The hard thing is to find out how to realize upon its demands.

With such issues upon this nation, it is as clear as the noonday sun that special effort must be made to meet them, or ruin will be upon us. And inasmuch as the old method of "might makes right" can no longer be maintained by a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, it is thoroughly apparent that some way other than the old one must be utilized in the emergency. It is equally certain that the only way left is to so *establish righteousness and justice in the hearts of all the people* that they will stand squarely for the upholding of the truths which common sense insists are good enough. Nothing short of this can save us long from disaster and shipwreck.

And by no other means can righteousness and justice be so successfully established in the hearts of all the people as through the medium of the public schools. *It is within the possibilities for these schools to be so conducted and utilized that they shall impart a love of righteousness and of justice to all the children of all the people; shall disseminate among them a true spirit of mutualness, and breathe into them the breath of brotherly love and of genuine democracy, for use in all the affairs of life, both private and public.* That is what these schools were established to do; and that they must do, or yield their place to some institution that can do what the situation demands.

46 But if these schools do this, they must meet the needs of *all* the children of *all* the people, so that, when grown, these children, having become men and women, shall be *equal to a satisfactory adjustment of the issues that are upon them.* These schools can never accomplish the purposes they were made to fulfill by devoting the major part of their energies and methods



to the *special interest* of a *few* of the children of a *few* of the people, *no matter who or what these few may be*. They can never do it by persisting in the use of *obsolete ways and means which were primarily fashioned for the cloister of an old-time gentility*. They can never do it by following a *psychology that is based on the uniformity of the human mind, and on the possibility of environment fashioning every individuality to a common model*.

All these things have been weighed in the balance for the last fifty years, and common sense proclaims the fact that they have been found wanting in many respects. They should not be discarded, any or all of them, merely because they are old. Nothing should be discarded merely because it is old. "Would the son discard the father?" Neither should they be retained merely because they are old. Things wear out in this world. They have their day, and when their day is done, they should move on. All that is good in them should be kept for the use of those who come after. All that has served its time should either be buried or hung up in a museum of antiquities. This is simple common sense, it is the truth, and the truth is good enough.

Here, then, it seems to me, is the summing up of the whole matter. The situation demands of our public schools that they fit all of the children of all of the people for all of the duties of life for which God has given them power. For such work all of the people contribute a common fund which can rightfully be used only for the common good of all. There can be no pets, no selections, no survivals of the so-called fittest at the expense of those whom a mere material philosophy would sacri-



fice simply because they are weak. These schools are under the spirit of the new law of love and mutualness, and not under the letter of the old law of domination and the dictation of those who have the power of control.

And the question for you and for me is, Will we put forth every effort to exploit these schools, as the situation demands? Will we be brave enough to look forward and upward, and to push on, even if it does cost us labor and struggle and worry and weariness? Will we be anxious that "not one of the least of these little ones shall perish"; or will we be indifferent, and say, "What is that to us, every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost"? Will we be willing to follow a Moses of common sense, up and on, to God; or will we beg of some Aaron to make us a calf out of the jewels of precedent and conventionality—something that we may comfortably worship, and sit still where we are? Will we be genuinely democratic in this nation which we so proudly call the land of the free; or will we be aristocratic and monarchical in fact, while sitting under the protection of the Stars and Stripes?

Brethren and sisters of every name and order, fellow citizens, teachers, fathers and mothers of this great Republic, it is up to us! What are we going to do about it? Let's do the right thing, the thing which common sense says is good enough. We will!

I have faith to believe that the common sense of all our people will, one day, put our public schools into such shape that they will do all that is required of them; that they will take into account the way the children are, each one of them, and that they will so teach, train, and educate them, that they will, each one, fill to the full the

particular niche in our Republic which his or her own individuality is best fitted for.

I know the way is largely untried, that the seas we have to sail are as yet, many of them, uncharted. But, none the less, we *must* sail them; for the goal of *absolute mutualness in education* is also named, and *it cannot be countermanded*. There is nothing left for us to do but to

"Cut the hawsers — haul out — shake out every sail !  
Steer for the deep waters only.  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.  
O daring joy, but safe ! Are they not all the seas of God ?  
O farther, farther, farther, sail !"

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"Is it a dream ?  
Nay, but the lack of it a dream !  
And, wanting this, life's wealth and lore a dream,  
And all the world a dream !"





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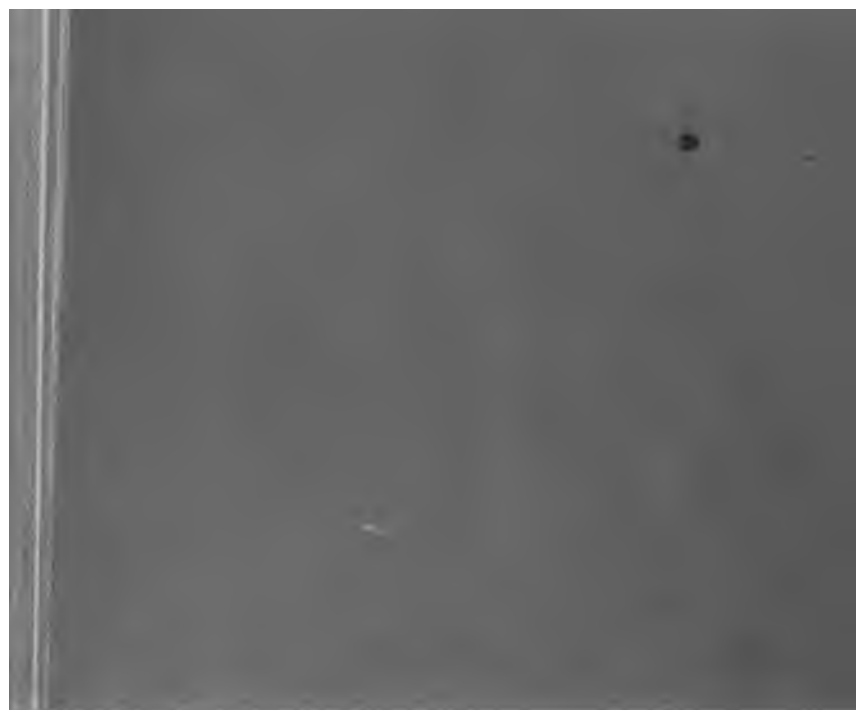




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